

TO 'EN 'APXH: 2/8

OR,

An Exercitation

UPON A MOMENTOUS QUESTION

IN

Divinity, and Case of Conscience:

VIZ.

Whether it be lawfull for any Person to Act contrary to the Opinion of his own Conscience, formed from Arguments that to him appear very Probable, though not Necessary or Demonstrative.

WHERE

The *Opinions* of the *Papists, Vasquez, Sanches, Azonius, &c.* are shewed, as also the *Opinions* of some *Protestants, viz. Mr. Hooker, BP Sanderson, Dr. Fulwood, &c.* and compared with the *Opinions* of others; The *Negative Part* of the *Question* Maintained; the *Unreasonableness* of the *Popish Opinions*, and some *Protestants*, for *Blind Obedience*, detected; and many other things discoursed.

By a *Protestant.*

Cum ergo Opinionem aliquam, non ob assensum aliorum, sed ob Causas Probabiles, pro verâ habes, obligatus es in Conscientiâ ne contra eam agas, licet Superiores aliud à te exigant, donec rationes veriores audias; &c. Baldvinus in Caf. Conf. l. 1. cap. 9.

Quicquid fit contra Conscientiam, peccatum est: Sive Conscientiâ sit Errans, sive Opinans, sive rectè informata. Alsted. in Theol. Caf. c. 2. n. 2.

Namquam licet contra propriam Opinionem, vel certam vel probabilem agere, propter aliorum Autoritatem. Ames in Caf. l. 1. cap. 5.

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TO THE

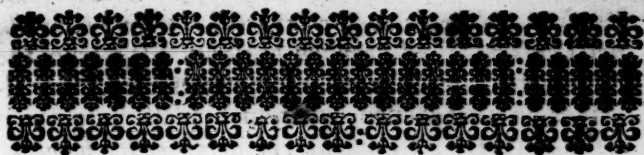
MONUMENTS

OF THE

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OF THE

LONDON
Printed in the Year, 1815.



TO THE
Christian and Protestant READER.

Reader,

THOU canst not but think we have been a little sensible of the many *Attacques*, have been made upon our *Reputation* in the sight of the World, representing us as persons *hardened with Prejudice, blinded with Passion, biassed by some false, yet plausible Principles which we must not recant*, Men who have nothing to say for our selves, *factious, seditious, ungovernable, fit for Gallies, &c.* Insomuch as a late Author tells his Lord, *That all the Saying and Writing in the World concerning us, will be to no purpose; (nor indeed will it, if it be no more nervous than any thing we see in his Book,)* for as to his two *Cases*, he first supposeth, *That we judge the things required of us lawfull, (is not this Noble disputing, to Begg the Question?)* we would fain have him name us one *Non-con.* of that mind: But it was not enough for him to begg it once, but in his *Case of Scandal*, he begs again; That those who urge *Scandal* as an Argument, understand by it, only *Grieving or displeasing some.* Most ridiculous! Can he shew us any *Non-con.* that ever said, *That*

To the Reader.

indeed he judged the thing Lawfull, but because some People would be grieved or angred, therefore he would not Conform. *Ad Populum phalaras.* It is true, the Argument from Scandal is sometimes used, but alwayes in that Sence wherein himself judgeth it good; That is, because by our doing of it, supposing any of us do think some thing lawfull, yet should we doe it, we should be occasion of sin to others, probably inducing them to doe it, who judge it unlawfull. But the truth is, take the Argument in this sence, it is not valuable, not one of us of a thousand thinks the things required, Lawfull; for those that do so, we should advise them, to contemn the Scandal, because of the Superiours Command. In his Second Case he quits himself as well, for he begs again the Question: That the suffering Nonconformists would grant him, that they do not judge they suffer in the Exercise of True Religion; that is surely, that they may not presumptuously sin against God. Indeed here he endeavours to prove it by a series of Propositions, but there he pitifully begs both his 5th Conclusion, and his 6th; upon which two all the rest hang. For though it be granted, that it belongs to the Magistrate, to determine Circumstances in the Worship of God, i. e. Circumstances of Action, quatenus an humane action, whether necessary to it, as Time and Place; or convenient for it, and decent, i. e. manifestly so, from the Light of Nature, and the universal Guise and Custom of the place: Yet the Nonconformists never yielded any Power under Heaven, a Right to appoint Ceremonies, i. e. Circumstances appropriated to the Action as Religious; these they say, (contrary to his third Conclusion,) are determined in Scripture, or if not, may be left to liberty, (con-

(contrary to his fourth Conclusion.) Thus Reader, judge how fairly we are dealt with. One writes like a *Bedlam*, and rails like a Female out of *Billingsgate*, instead of arguing; another comes out like a *man of Warr*, but will not fight, unless we will first lay down our Arms, grant him *the things are lawfull*, and then he will *crawl over us at an insufferable rate*. 'Tis time to put an end to these things; we have therefore thought fit, To revoke this whole Controversie to an Original Question;

Whether it be lawfull to act against an Opining Conscience?

If our Brethren will agree with us in the Negative, we will joyn Issue with them there, *Whether we have not probable Arguments to induce us, to conclude the things required of us, unlawfull*; or at least to supply what in this point is defective. For we think we need ask our liberty for no longer time than, till *Cotton, Ames, Gillespy, Calderwood, Bradshaw*, and forty more be answered. If these Eager Gentlemen, be Men, and Scholars, let them come forth, leave railing, and misrepresenting our Opinions, and take them as we state them, and answer strictly. If not, Silence would tend more to their reputation amongst all intelligent persons, than such impertinent Scriblings.

We have been more willing to speak to this Question, because it is the very *Foundation of Popery*, (so much feared.)

That it is lawfull for men to act contrary to the Opinions of their own Consciences, if other Doctors think it lawfull and necessary, if Superiours command it.

Possess but people of the Brutishness of this Opinion,

To the Reader.

nion, and you have done more to barre out Popery, than confuting twenty of their particular Opinions, which are but Superstructures upon this Foundation. 'Tis obliging men to *Believe as the Church believes*, and to *doe all they are commanded by Ecclesiastical Superiours, without disputing with, or hearkning to their own Judgements*, that must bring Popery into any Nation, so full of Knowledge as England is, if ever it comes on. Other things indeed may bring in *Persecution*, but not *Popery*; and that *Persecution* will not be of many dayes. Seeing therefore the Author of the Cases of *Scandal and Persecution* thought it worthy of him, to lay aside his thoughts of writing against the *Papists*; as he tells us, p. 3. of his *Introduction*, to speak against *Non-conformists*, (and that when he had no more to say than that Book hath,) and that upon the advice of so grave a Person as *Br Sanderfon*, (whom we reverence, as better understanding his Learning, and candid stating Questions, and judicious speaking to them.) We hope we shall be excused in our Adventure to speak to a *Question*, which while it offers something in our own defence, doth manifestly strike at the very root and Foundation of the *Papish Religion*, which almost wholly owes it self to *Blind Obedience*. Reader, we shall not complement thee: Read, acquit or condemn us, as thou seest cause, upon weighing what we say, and judge what is against us, *præter merum imperium & convitia.*

Whether

Whether it be lawful to act contrary
to an Opining Conscience?

CHAP. I.

The Question shortly stated. The terms [Conscience,] and [Opining] opened: The Various complexions of Conscience; arising from the different mediums by which light shines into a soul about a Practical Proposition. The terms of Faith, Science, Opinion, Doubting, Suspicion, Scruple, opened. The true notion of a Fixed Conscience, an Opining Conscience, a doubting, and a Scrupulous Conscience. The Schoolmen's Notion of an Opinion. The Question fully stated. The method propounded for handling it.

SECT. I.

The question is shortly and plainly this: Whether without sinning against God, man can act contrary to the dictate of his own Conscience, though but Opining. By Conscience, not to trouble our Reader with the various Notions, and Homonymies of it, which have little relation to our intended discourse: we mean, That Judgement in man, by which he determineth concerning good or evil, as it relateth

relateth to practice, according to the Dictate of Natural, or enlightned Reason. We think it well described by the Schoolmen, *Judicium quo aliquid bonum esse vel malum judicamus.* Sanchez in *Op. mor. lib. 1. cap. 9. r.* Reason is a noble faculty in man, by which he discourseth *Conclusions* from *Principles*; and these either *Connate* or *Natural*, or *acquired* from exercise, reading and comparing things, with things, Now the work of Reason is, when a *practical Proposition* is exhibited to it, to sit as a Judge upon it, enquiring either upon the *Truth* or *falsity* of it, by comparing it with the *standards* of hence it maketh up a *Judgement* whether the *Proposition* be true or false, good or bad. This *Judgement* Divines call *Judicium singulare*: or *Judicium conscientia practicum*, The *Judgment of Conscience*, or *Conscience* it self.

SECT. 2. This *Judgment* is made up by certain *Mediums*, or arguments, which do not in all cases, shine with the like degree of light upon the soul: for as there is a difference in *Propositions*, some are *True*, some are *false*; of those which are, some are *necessarily* so: So as it is impossible they should be false. Some are *contingently* so, which are true, but it is possible they may be, or might have been false; as now *That God is good*, is a *Proposition necessarily true*. That *Peter was good* is true, but no more than *contingently* so, for he was bad: So there is likewise a great difference in the minds assent to *Propositions*; some it agrees to, some it denieth. Of those to which it agreeth, There are some to which it agreeth firmly, and fixedly, without the least doubt of them: Now these are either such as are *Propositions of faith*, being things plainly revealed in the word of God: or, *Matters evident to sense*. Thus every man will agree the *fire is hot*, and that the *Sun shines at noon day*: or else such, which have a certain cause of their truth, which we can see. The Assent of the mind to the first is called *Faith*, which the mind assents to the truth of a *Proposition*, upon the authority of God revealing it. The Assent of the mind to the two latter is called *Science*. Now there are other *Propositions*, for which the soul can have no such *Mediums* as these to direct

cern them by, But either, some *Humane Authority*, or some *probable Reason*. The *Assent* which the mind giveth upon either of these accounts is called *Opinion*, which is but the *Judgement* of Conscience, from *probable Arguments*, usually called *dialektick arguments*, for there are not many things capable of demonstration.

§. 3. Hence the certainty of the Mind, as to the Truth, or Falshood of any proposition, is, 1. Either *Supernatural*, from Divine Revelation; or 2. *Natural*, from the Evidence of *Sense*, or *Demonstration*; or 3. *Moral*, from probable *Authority* or *Arguments*. But now in regard of the differing Force of Arguments, and the variety of them, for, or against the same proposition: This assent is capable of various degrees, and may variously be incumbred. A Christian may give some Credit to a proposition, yet have some *scruples* about it (which like little stones in the shooe, from whence the term is borrowed) may trouble his Practice: Or may have some *doubts* whether the thing be true or no: Or I may have an *Opinion*, that is, verily judge the thing to be so, or not so.

§. 4. The Philosopher tells us, that in Moral things, a Moral certainty is enough to Act upon; and indeed it must be so, for as to most things of particular practice, we can neither be *Naturally* nor *Supernaturally* ascertained. Not *Naturally*, because we cannot see the certain Causes. Not *Supernaturally*, for it had been impossible that God's Word should have set every individual Man a particular Rule for every individual Action. In these Cases therefore (as we said) a *Moral certainty* is ground enough for Action, which is, or may be consistent with some Scruples or Fears. For Example, suppose this the Question.

Whether a Man be fit to Receive the Supper of the Lord?

It may be he cannot fully satisfy himself, but he may have some fears, and jealousies, and Scruples, of the Reasonableness.

ness of which, he can give himself no very good Account; but yet he finds so much ground to conclude he is, that he is Morally certain. In this case he is bound not to omit it. Suppose one sick of a *Quinsie*, or *Plenrisie*, or some other Disease, usually Mortal without timely Bleeding, and application of means: He is not *Mathematically*, or *Demonstratively* certain, that he shall dye, if he doth not use such means, (his Natural strength may Conquer it) but he may be *Morally* certain, and so Obligated to Act. Whether a Man may be said to know, that of which he is onely *Morally certain*, is a little *Velitation* among Critical Philosophers. *Aristotle* tells us, that what falleth under *Science*, considered as an Habit of the Mind, must be something demonstrable, but this is onely a strife about words.

§. 5. Much in the present Debate, depending upon the term *Opining*, the fixing of the true Notion of an *Opinion*, or at least, such a one as we understand in the Question is of great Consequence. It is sometimes used to signifie a *Sudden and rash assent of the Understanding to a proposition*. But in this sense, we have nothing to do with it. 2. *It is taken for the assent of the Mind to one part of a proposition as true, yet not without fear of being mistaken*. 3. But Thirdly (in which sense we use it) It is also taken to signifie the *Souls assent to a proposition upon probable Arguments*. That is such Arguments as do not demonstrate the thing to the Soul, so as to put it out of all possibility of doubting, but make it appear very like to be true. *Probabile est quod quum certum non sit magis tamen videtur esse verum vel falsum*, saith the *Logician*. *Aquinas*, in his Summs, *Qu. 1. Art. 4.* Describes an *Opinion* according to the Second Notion, thus.

It is (saith he) the *Act of the Understanding, inclining to one part of a Contradiction, not without a fear of the Truth of the other part*.

Valentia (as he is quoted by *Sanchez*, *Op. Mor. l. 1. c. 9.*) will allow no Man any longer to keep within the Latitude of an *Opinion*, than while he perswades himself, that although he

hath

hath probable Reasons to judge this, or that Lawful, or unlawful, yet they are not such; but (if he could hit on it) might be Answered by himself, or some other: But yet neither Sanchez, nor Vasquez, nor Azorius will allow this streightned Notion of an Opinion, though we cannot see how they will avoid it, till they put [*cum formidine alterius*] out of their own Descriptions, for what should he who openeth be afraid of, but that his Arguments are Answerable? So as in effect they all agree, That a Man perswaded upon probable Arguments, of the Lawfulness, or Unlawfulness of a thing, no longer Opineth, than he feareth his own Reasons may be Answered. But to us, *Be it so, or so*, it is all a case; we call that an Opinion, which is *The Assent of the Mind to a Proposition upon Arguments, not Demonstrably, but Probably certain*. And we have here the Advantage; for if we prove it not Lawful to act against an *Opining Conscience* in their sense, they will yield it much more Unlawful to act against an *Opining Conscience* in this sense, which with them is a *fixed Conscience*, either in good or evil. And that it is unlawful to act against such a Conscience: *Vasquez* is so confident, that he Disputeth against *Almainus*, and *Andreas de Castro*, who had reserved unto God a Liberty to dispense with a Man acting against a *fixed Conscience*, so as that a Man may do it without guilt; and contends, *That God himself cannot dispense with it, because it is an acting against the Law of Nature*, *Vasquez* in 12. Disp. 61. Cap. 2.

§. 6. There are [besides Opinion] some other terms, Divines take Notice of: *Suspition*, which they make the Jealousie of the Mind, or some light Inclination to one part, yet without an Assent. *Aquinas* makes it the Younger Daughter of an Opinion, and calls it an Opinion with a very *light Evidence*. *Doubling* is another, which they make the Pendulousness of the Mind, as to the Lawfulness or Unlawfulness of a thing after Debate. Now, from this variety of Propositions, and the variety of *Mediums*, through which a Light comes into our Minds, discovering the Truth, or

Falshood of them, and the variety of our assent consequent to such *Mediums*, arise the various Notions of a *fixed Conscience*. A *Doubling Conscience*. An *Opining Conscience*. A *Scrupulous Conscience*. These are but the several Complexions of Conscience, caused from the variety or degree of that Light in which it seeth a Proposition as true or false.

§. 7. If the Matter in Question be of that Nature, that it thinks it can find a plain, and particular Evidence for it in Scripture, or can judge of it by the certain Evidence of sense, or see it in the certain Causes, the Conscience is fixed, either *truly*, or *erroneously*; and (as to this thing) beareth the Name of a *fixed*, Good, or *Erroneous Conscience*, as it is, or is not deceived in its apprehension of the *Medium*. If the Matter of the Proposition, or that part to which the Soul adhereth, be of that Nature, that the Soul cannot find a plain Revelation in Scripture, nor discern it by sense, nor see it in the certain necessary Causes, but hath many *probable Arguments*, rather for the one part than the other: Whether it thinks these Arguments Answerable or no, or thinks that possibly they may be Answerable, but as yet it can see no Answer to them which it judgeth sufficient; this now is an *Opining Conscience*. If the Mind be equally ballanced on both sides with Arguments, that it hath as much to say why such a thing should be Lawful, as why it should be unlawful, or unlawful, as Lawful; this is now a *Doubling Conscience*, and rarely happeneth to a knowing and intelligent Soul. If the Soul be afraid, that this or that is *not Lawful*, or fancieth that such a thing is Lawful, but hath none, or if any very light Reasons for it, possibly such or such Men say so, or such or such Men do it, or do it not; this is a *Suspicious*, or *Scrupulous Conscience*.

§. 8. In short, in Order to a Man's spotless walking. There are infinite Propositions to be weighed; God hath hung up a Beam, called *Conscience*, in every individual Soul, in Order to the weighing of them; upon this Beam is written, 1 *Thes.*

§. 21. PROVE ALL THINGS, *hold fast that which is good.* The Weights which God hath allowed us to weigh things by, are, Divine Revelation, Demonstrations, Evidence of Sense, Topicks or more probable Logical Arguments, made up from Logical places, and Conclusions formed from the comparing of *Rational and Spiritual things*; 'tis Evident, with Rational or Spiritual things more Evident; when any of these fully weigh down the Souls assent, there's a *Fixed Conscience*: When they equally incline the Balance one way, or another, there is a *Doubting Conscience*. When they *strongly incline* the Soul more one way than another, ther's an *Opining Conscience*. When they cause a very light inclination of the Soul to one part rather than to the other, there is a *Suspicious*, or a *Scrupulous Conscience*.

§. 9. Now, what the Duty of Christians is, under these various Complexions of Conscience, is a point, which hath justly exercised valuable Divines of all persuasions, for as we are capable by any of our Actions to incur the wrath of God, so as to them generally, our Consciences are Complexionated, one way or another; for if we Act, we either do a thing, being *fixedly* perswaded, it is Lawful, or unlawful, or *doubting* whether it be so, or *strongly inclined* to think it is so or so; or *suspecting*, and being scrupulous. Concerning a Conscience that is *fixed* in that which is *truly good*, none ever doubted of the Lawfulness of Acting according to it; or unlawfulness to Act against it: But concerning *Conscience* in all the other Circumstances, there have many Questions been started, as to the Truth in which the World is very far from being Universally agreed. *Whether a Man may Act against a Conscience fixed in an Error*, is a Question spoken to by most *School-men* and *Casuits*. It is usually said, that such a Conscience doth *Ligare non Obligare*. It is not our business to dispute, how well that distinction (Ordinarily Father'd upon *Durandus*,) is worded: but we do not remember, we ever met with any Deliberate Divine, that would affirm. *That in case a Man were fully (though falsely*
per-

perswaded) that this or that thing was unlawful to be done, yet he might Lawfully do it. Though indeed (if the thing be a necessary Duty) he sinneth in not doing it. *Vasquez* saith, it is against the very Law of Nature. *Sanchez* saith, that although the Law of God be the primary Rule, yet every mans Conscience is the proximate Rule of his Actions, and therefore he cannot Act against it. *Dr. Ames* saith, That he who doth it Interpretatively, sins against God: For he must needs do contrary to what he believeth to be the will of God. *Filiacius* tract. 21. *M. Qu. c. 4.* saith, That he which doth it, doth that which he thinketh to be sin: And, saith he, *hoc ipso amat peccatum*, by this thing he sheweth he loveth to sin, and chuseth sin. But this is not our Question: We suppose a Man not to be fully and demonstrably perswaded, that this or that Action is unlawful, but onely upon Arguments, which seem to him very probable, verily to believe it is unlawful, and Query whether, while he so believeth he can do that thing. And this Question divideth it self, according to the different Notion of an Opinion which we before hinted, viz. *Whether a Man thus perswaded of the unlawfulness of an Action, by Arguments indeed, not demonstrative, but such as he judgeth very probable, and which he himself cannot Answer, so neither doth he think others can: may yet, because his Principles are not Supernaturally, or Mathematically made certain to him, act against the Opinion of his own Conscience, in Obedience to the will of any Creature.* 2. *Whether a Man thus perswaded of the unlawfulness of any thing, by Arguments not demonstrative, but probable (as before said) though at present he can neither himself answer them, nor see them answered by any other; yet suspecting they may be answered, may while this is the Condition of his Conscience, act against the present judgment of it, though it be incumbered with such a Zealousie or Suspicion.*

Now, as to the first of these Questions, we find little or nothing spoken in the Affirmative, by any *Popish Casuists, or School-men*. They generally making some fear of the contrary part of the Practical Proposition, to which the Person inclineth,
and

and Jealousie that this part of the proposition is false, and his Arguments Answerable, essential to an *Opinion*, conclude, that a Soul perswaded, though but upon probable Arguments (if it hath no such fear, suspicion, or Jealousie, to have a fixed Conscience, and though fixed in an Error, yet conclude it utterly unlawful for a Man to Act against it. But if there be in any Soul any fear, suspicion, or Jealousie, that its Arguments may be Answered, then they conclude the Soul but Opining, and do indeed dispute for a Lawfulness to Act against it, though under several *Cautions* and *limitations*. At this rebound therefore we will take the Question, and state it thus.

Quest. Whether, supposing a Man or Woman not Demonstrably perswaded, that this or that Action is unlawful, but from arguments, which to him or her appear very probable, verily believing so, yet not without some Jealousie, Fear, or Suspicion that he may be mistaken, and his arguments may be answered: may, while he thus believes, do that thing in Obedience to Men, which in this manner he judgeth sinful and unlawful to be done.

For the clearer handling of this momentous, and important Question, we shall with all Candor Examine.

1. *What Divines of all sorts, whether Popish, or Protestant, have determined in the case, and upon what grounds?*
2. *We shall endeavour to defend the Negative part of the Question, proving it wickedness for any to act contrary to the judgment of their own Consciences, though that judgment be onely made up from intrinsick, probable arguments.*
3. *We shall answer the Objections of those, who have spoke any thing for the affirmative, with any colour of Reason.*

C H A P. II.

The Opinions of Popish School-men, and Casuists in the Case particularly of Vasquez, Sanchez Medina, Filiucius, Azorius. Their Monstrous Assertions, what they make necessary to make an Opinion probable. The Opinion of one Doctor according to them sufficient to warrant Men to Act contrary to their own Opinions. Their Opinions what a Man ought to-do, when Superiours Command Inferiours, what the Inferiours judge unlawful. The summe of their detestable Doctrine.

§. 1. **W**E will begin with the Popish Authors. Vasquez tells us, that the Question is not, *Whether a Man ought not to follow the Judgment of his own Conscience, or could act against it;* but when it happeneth, that there are two opposite Opinions about a thing to be done: One saying, it is a sin to do it; another saith, it is not: *The difficulty is, saith he, how a Man should carry himself betwixt them, so as to form up a singular Judgment of Conscience, which without sin he may embrace.* Vasquez in 12. disp. 72. cap. 2. So then the Jesuite (it seemeth) doth yield the case, viz. That if once a Man hath formed a particular Judgment of Conscience, that the thing is unlawful, though it be but from probable Arguments, he cannot do it, he onely prescribes in a variety of Opinions in the World, as to a singular Matter, how Men should well form that Judgment. But not to wrong him in the 4. cap. of that Disputation, n. 15. he seems to be of another mind, and asserteth. *That a Man in some Cases, may act contrary to his own Opinion, yea, that a Learned Man may Lawfully act contrary to his own Opinion, according to the Opinion of others, though it be less safe, and less probable than his own, provided there be any Reason and probabi-*

probability for the Opinion of those others. Yet still retaining his Opinion, as more probable, looking upon that Opinion of others; as probable by extrinsecal Arguments [that is the Authority, Judgments, and Testimony of others] though he judgeth his own Opinion more probable by intrinsecal Arguments.

The Reasons he gives for this, are these.

1. *Because we may act according to any Opinion which seemeth probable to us.* We will anon Argue that Case, whether it be possible that any thing, from meer extrinsecal Arguments can seem probable to a reasonable Soul. The contrary to which at the same time seems probable from intrinsecal Arguments: But we know how far the *Doltrine of Probabilities* serves the woful Interest of that *Apostate Synagogue of Rome*.

---- *Largo*

Proventu est, gnauum non deceptura colonum.

2. *Because it seems incredible to be true, that a Man may not do what all the World judgeth Lawful, if he alone judgeth it unlawful.* All the World, we confess, is a large term, and puts the Case to the highest pinch, but yet it seems not at all incredible, if that be true which the School-men Univerfally agree; *That the particular Conscience must be the proximate Rule of action*: For what shall it profit a Man, more to follow all the World, than to gain all the World, if he loseth his own Soul? A Man is certainly bound to follow his own Rules, not anothers. These are that Jesuites best Reasons: He confesseth that in this he followeth *Medina*, some of whose Reasons he yet rejects. Further, to make the Opinion of another probable to us, he requires,

1. *That it be the Opinion of many; not one single Doctor.*
2. *That it be commonly Judged to contain no Error.*
3. *That we know that those Doctors have considered, and Examined our Reasons.*

These things supposed, he thinks that although in a Mat-

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ter of Practice we have a more probable Opinion, and that from Arguments fetch'd from the Nature of the thing, and Scripture appearances, yet a Man may act contrary if others judge it is Lawful, yea, though he hath some fear, that that Opinion of others is not true : In which Case, both *Cajetan* and *Navarrus* (as he confesseth) differ from him : But he concludes it, *ib. Cap. 5. n. 26.* provided that this fear amount not to a doubt or hæitation (we wonder how that is possible to be avoyded) for in that Case, he avoweth it not Lawful to act contrary to our own Opinion, in Compliance with others. This is the Doctrine of *Vasquez* and *Medina*; and which *Vasquez* saith is Common in the Schools.

S. 2. *Sanchez*, *Op. mor. lib. 1. cap. 9. n. 13.* States the Question thus : *Whether it be Lawful for any to act according to the Opinion of others which he judgeth probable, though in respect of the danger of sin 'tis safe, against the Opinion of his own Conscience which he judgeth more probable, and more safe.* He confesseth that some deny it, because of those two Ordinary Rules:

In dubiis anima tutior pars est eligenda, and Tene certum & relinque incertum, i. e. In doubtful Cases we ought to take the more certain part, and to leave what is more uncertain, and to hold what is certain. And again, *Because a Man cannot act against the dictate of his Conscience.* But *Sanchez* is himself of another mind, as he there declareth, *viz. That it is Lawful for a Man to act contrary to the Opinion of his own Conscience, which he judgeth safest, according to the Opinion of others which he judgeth less probably true, and less safe.* Of this mind besides *Vasquez* and *Medina* (before mentioned by us) he saith are *Mercado, Valentia, Julier, Suarez, Enriquez, Azorin, Bannes, Navarrus, Arragon, Salon, Lopez, Ledesma, Salas, Sairus, and Leonardus.* More than a full Jury, were they all good Men and true : But let us hear their strong Reasons. *Sanchez* gives us them thus.

1. *Because he who thus acteth, acteth according to Reason, and therefore his action is not to be charged with rashness or imprudence.*

2. *Because*

2. *Because in this case, a man may have a Moral certainty.*
3. *Because as that is a probable Opinion in matters of Speculations, which a man may embrace without danger of Error or deceit. So in Moral things, that Opinion is probable which a man may embrace without sin.*
4. *Because it is onely sinful to att doubting.*

§. 3. But is it possible that a reasonable Soul should understand so wild ratiocinations? Suppose a *Papist*, or at least, one who hath been so bred, upon the Question,

Whether there be Idolatry in the Mass or no?

Seeth very probable intrinsecal Arguments to make him conclude, *That the Mass is Idolatrous*, and that it is unlawful for him to go to it any more. On the other side, he findeth many *Doctors of their Church*, positive, that it is not *Idolatrous*, and that he may be present at it (we will suppose that they urge it, not as necessary, but only plead it Lawful.) Here now the private Opinion, is both *more probable*, and *more safe*. *More probable* it must be, because it is a *man's own Opinion*, and that formed from intrinsecal Arguments; so that to him it must be more probable. *More safe* it must be, supposing it be onely attested by others, as *Lawful*. We would fain know now whether under these Circumstances, this Man may Lawfully go to *Mass* against the dictate of his Conscience. Yes (say they) for the Opinion of the *Doctors* makes the contradictory part of the Proposition *probable too*. Possibly something might be said for this, if the Person had no intrinsecal Arguments to incline him to the other part. But is not this Non-sence to any Reasonable Soul? That it should judge *contradictions* both probably true; the one from one sort of Arguments, the other from another sort. Yet this is a *Postulation* begg'd in the Case, both by *Vasquez* and *Sanchez*, and all their Brethren; That one and the same thing, at the same time, and to the same Soul, upon differing Arguments, may appear in all probability *Lawful* and *Unlawful*, which we confess is a Riddle too hard for us;

or we think any others but themselves. But suppose this were possible, as both Sanchez and Vasquez plead. Yet it is not Lawful for a Man to act according to the Opinion of another (saith Cajetan and Navarr) if he be in any fear that others are in the wrong; and though both Vasquez and Sanchez reject this, yet even they are so kind, as to grant, that the Person cannot act in this case, if he doth doubt. Now, we would fain know how a Man can possibly have intrinseck Arguments against what is propounded to him for Practice, and not *hesitare ac dubitare* (which are their words) doubt at all, whether he may Lawfully act. Or how he can act with that *Moral certainty* which Sanchez speaks of. Can a Man (think we) be Morally certain of that, against which he hath probable intrinseck Arguments, merely because others say the contrary. And this too, although what they say appear to the Person concerned both *less probable*, and *less safe*. What strange Apprehensions have these Men, both of themselves, and of God?

§. 4. *Filiucius* (another of the *Popish Casuists*) telleth us. That it is Lawful to follow the *more probable Opinion*, leaving that which is *less probable*. *Qu. mor. tr. 21. c. 4. n. 126*. Compare this with what we heard Vasquez even now saying. That a man's own Opinion is *more probable* (and so it must be to him, or he would never hold it.) The Case by this Conclusion seems to be granted; but in the very next Paragraph he again concludeth, That it is also Lawful to follow the *less probable Opinion*, though it be *less safe*: and this he saith, is the Common Opinion of more Modern *Casuists* and *Schoolmen*, and quotes for it *Medina*, *Vasquez*, *Bannes*, and *Navarrus*; his Reason is,

I. *Because whoso doth so, acteth prudently, believing those that are skill'd in that Art, and submitting to their Judgment.*

He saith well, if we were speaking of Actions, as to which there is no danger of immediate sinning, and running the guilt of Damnation, but he begs the Question shamefully, while

while he averreth with Sanchez, *That there is no danger of sin in such Actions*; and one of his Brethren (with whom he is very angry for it) calleth this Opinion of his, and Sanchez his seventeen Doct^{rs} *Perniciosa inscitia prolapsionem*; a slip of pernicious Ignorance: And he used him kindly too, for *Prolapsio* was doubtless too mild a word; it was unquestionably a wilful Error, but such a one as those Learned Men saw necessary to be maintained, or the Doctrine of *Blind Obedience* could not stand.

§ 5. *Azorius, Institut. Moral. lib. 2. cap. 26.* In this Case determines, *That we may follow an Opinion that is less certainly safe, if it be more probable or certain*; from which we might conclude, that in regard the Opinion of our own Consciences is always to us more probable and certain, than the Opinion of any other is, or can be, though there be a possibility of our sinning in following our own, and no possibility in following of anothers, yet we may follow it:

2. He concludes, *That if both Opinions be Equally safe, we are not bound to prefer that which is more probable.* (Yet he confesseth, that *Major, Corduba, and Medina* think otherwise) he thinks the probability of an Opinion is enough to guide our Practice, and that we are not bound to follow that which is most probably true. But besides that, some of his own Brethren tell him, and that truly, that *That Opinion* which is (though not demonstratively, yet most probably true) hath least danger of sin in it. Whether an Opinion can to any be *probably true* by extrinseck Arguments, which at the same time we judge from intrinseck Arguments probably not true, as a Question not yet resolved. We do not at all doubt, but the *Judgment* and *Testimony* of others may give a Proposition some shew of Probability to be true. If we have no Arguments against what they say, from some appearances (at least) of Scripture, or some Logical Topicks. But when we have such Arguments, that yet their Opinions in the contrary should seem *probable* to us, is a great Riddle, and seems a great baffling of a Reasonable Soul. Especially

Especially considering that these Forreign Arguments are but Common, and may be brought in most Cases on both sides.

S. 6. And indeed here all the Popish Doctors are at a great loss, viz. To determine what those Doctors must be; how many must concur in an Opinion, before they may overrule us in Practice, against the Judgment of our own Consciences formed from proper intrinsecal Arguments. Sanchez saith, one Doctor is enough, and quotes on his side, *Anges, Sylv. Navarrus, Valentia*, and *Sa*; yea, and he proveth it by this Learned Argument: *That is a probable Opinion which is not built upon a light Foundation.* Now (saith he) *the Opinion of one Doctor is not a light Foundation.* Ay, but what if one Doctors Opinion be for us, another be against us? They will tell you, *They are both probable.* Take then the summe of the Jesuites Doctrine.

1. *A probable Opinion is that, which is not built upon a light Foundation.* (So saith Sanchez.)
2. *Any one Doctors Opinion is a considerable, and no light Foundation.* That is Sanchez his medium.
3. *Let a man have never so many intrinsecal, proper Arguments, not demonstrative, to prove a thing unlawful; yet he may do it if he can but find one Doctor who judgeth it Lawful.*
4. *If one Doctor judgeth it Lawful, another judgeth it unlawful, he may do what he pleaseth in it, for both parts are probable.* Hence Sanchez raiseth these Conclusions.
 1. *That if a Man, according to the Judgment of his own Conscience, perfectly doubteth, from intrinsecal Arguments, which in a practical case, he can find on the one side, or the other. Yet if he can from Extrinsecal Arguments, perswade himself that either part is Lawful, he may do either.*
 2. *That he who probably judgeth it unlawful, to Act according to a less probable Opinion, may yet Act according to that which he judgeth less probable, if he judgeth that it is probably Lawful for him to follow that which is less probable.*
 3. *That*

3. "That Learned Men may advise others to act contrary to what themselves, the Advisers, think Lawful, if another Doctor hath judged it Lawful."

These, and many other damnable and absurd Opinions they most impudently conclude, from these most wretched premises. And now, let any Judge, whether according to these Principles, there be any thing *Unlawful or no*; and one would think, that they do not judge any thing *Unlawful*, that will but read their *Escobar, Layman, Diana, Filicinus, Azorins, Sanchez*. Or a breviat of some of their Propositions, p. 17. in the *Additionalsto the Mystery of Jesuitism*, where he shall be directed also to the Authors.

S. 7. But hitherto they have onely told us, what a Man *May do*: Let us hear shortly their Opinion of what Men *Must do*: and particularly, *where Superiours Command us to act contrary to what we from proper intrinsecal Arguments judge Lawful*. *Adrianus*, as he is quoted by *Vasquez*, positively affirmeth, *That none can Lawfully Obey their Superiours, against the Opinion of his own Conscience*: he tells us also, *That Corduba* saith the same in effect, though he would save himself from this inconvenience by asserting, *That what in it self absolutely considered, is evil, may by some Circumstances be good; as when it is necessary for us, of two evils, to chuse one; here the lesser evil is made good, comparatively, and that (saith he) is the Case here (Vasquez 12. disp. 62. cap. 8.) It is an evil thing for a man to act contrary to the opinion of his own Conscience. And it is an evil thing to disobey our Superiours; but one of these we must do; in this case, saith he, It is Lawful for a man to act against his own opinion, in obedience to his Superiours; thus far the Jesuite.*

A Man might have expected such an unboyled Mess of Divinity from a *John of Leiden*, or a *Knipperdolling*; but is this spoken like a Divine? *Can there then be any necessity of sinning?* (where's Man's free-will in the mean time?) doth God ever bring the Soul into such a strait? Is it not a known Rule, *That of two evils of punishment, we may indeed chuse*
the

the least; but of two evils of sin, none? An Erroneous Conscience indeed is under necessity of sinning, but surely he hath no choice in the case, whether he will sin this way, or that way, but must follow the dictate of his Conscience, Whether the distinction of *Ligat, non obligat* be worth any thing or no; surely all will say, he cannot Act against his fixed erring Conscience. Is it not a known Rule, *That nothing can be made good by a Circumstance*, though indeed Circumstances may make a thing evil, because *Bonum esse Causis integris Malum e quolibet defectu*. Therefore *Vasquez* (who *Diana* saith, *is instar omnium*) explodes this Doctrine of *Corduba*, telling us truly, *That the Obedience which any Man oweth to his Superiours, supposeth the matter of the Superiours Command, not to be contrary to the Command of one who is higher than he;* for in such Cases no Obedience is due, nor is it any sin to disobey, viz. where the thing required, is contrary to the Law of Nature, the Law of God, or the Law of a Superiour in an higher Order. Again, it is very possible (as *Vasquez* saith) that it may be a greater sin to contradict my own Conscience, than not to Obey my Superiours, supposing my Conscience telleth me the thing required is contrary to the Law of Nature.

But yet *Vasquez* himself thinketh, that in case the Superiour Commandeth, a thing otherwise probably Lawful (that is, as we before heard, which some Doctor or Doctors judge so) then it is Lawful for a Man to Obey contrary to the private Opinion of his own Conscience, because he might do it in such case, though it were not Commanded; and this is his Principle.

That when the Precept of a Superiour may Lawfully be Obeyed, he is then bound to do it, and it becomes necessary.

This indeed is a strong Argument, if we could yield the premises, viz.

That a Man may Lawfully contrary to the probable Opinion of his own Conscience, follow the Opinion of another. *Quod adhuc est Demonstrandum.* We

We shall anon shew the Cursed Fruit of this Root, yet Vasquez limiteth this Doctrine a little, bytelling us,

1. That the Superiour must be unquestionably our Superiour.

2. That the Subject must know, and believe, that the Superiour Commandeth according to a probable Opinion, and must not think it probable, meerly because he is his Superiour; for (saith he.) The Dignity of the Superiour Commanding, doth not make an Opinion probable. Thus far now we have heard the Judgment of the Popish Casuists and School-men in this Case. The Summe is this.

That it is Lawful for a Man to do, what his own Conscience from intrinsick, probable Arguments judgeth Unlawful, if one or more Doctors do but Judge it Lawful, and in such Cases, if the Superiour Commandeth, he is bound to do what he in his own Conscience judgeth unlawful, if it be not apparently, and demonstratively so.

How near this comes to the Sentiments of some Modern Protestant Doctors, we may enquire hereafter, but before we come to that, let us enquire what the Ancienter Protestants have judged in the Case.

D CHAP.

C H A P. III.

The Opinion of former Protestants, about the lawfulness, or unlawfulness of Mens Acting contrary to the Opinion of their own Consciences. Such Acting condemned by all former Protestant Casuists. Baldwinus, Alstedius, Amesius, Perkins: The difference of some later Divines from their Fore-Fathers, particularly, Mr. Hooker. The Vanity of his Proof, from Deut. 17. 18. Acts 15. Or from Reason. Bishop Sanderson agreeing with Ancient Protestants. So Mr. Fulwood, in his Cases. The differing Expressions of some Divines of this present Age, The tender touching of the Question, and nibbling at the Opinion of the Popish Doctors in the Case by others. The Question again stated, and made ready for Debate.

§. 1. **W**E will begin with *Fredericus Baldwinus*, Professor at *Wittenbergh*, he, in his Cases, l. 1. cap. 9. Professedly disputeth this great point, he takes Notice of the two sorts of pretended probable Arguments, and determineth, in reference to both.

1. That an Opinion onely raised from the multitude of others Testimonies in the Case, bindeth no Man.

2. That an Opinion taken up upon probable Reasons, doth bind, and so bind, that a man cannot Act against it.

His words in Latine are these:

“Cum ergo opinionem aliquam, non ob assensum aliorum, sed
 “ob causas probabiles pro verâ habes. Obligatus es in Con-
 “scientiâ ne contra eam agas, licet Superiores aliud a te exi-
 “gant, donec rationes veriores audias in contrarium, ad quas
 “tamen audiendas semper paratus esse debes: Et opinionem
 “tuam

" *tuam audit à meliore sententiâ deponere.* That is,

When thou hast taken up any Opinion for true, not for the Testimony of others, but for probable Reasons, thou art bound in Conscience not to act against it; no, not though Superiours require thee to act, till thou hearest better Reasons to the contrary: To hear which thou oughtest to be always ready, and lay down thy Opinion, hearing a better. The Opinion of this *Grave* and Learned *Professor* is what we take it, & will be found to have been the Opinion of all Protestants of former Ages. For, the Observing Reader will find, as to this point, the same proportionable difference betwixt Ancient Protestant Divines, and a Modern brood, as betwixt the *Old Fathers* and *School-men*, and the later *Jesuites*, who have traded in *Scholastical*, and *Moral Divinity*. The latter professing wholly to differ from the former: We shall, I say, find, that all former Protestants have agreed, *That although he that is possessed of an opinion, that the thing which is by his Superiours required, is unlawful, out of Reverence to his Superiours, ought thoroughly to Examine his Opinion, and to hear better Reasons, if they can be brought, and being by them convinced, to lay down his opinion: Yet while he can do that, he cannot do the thing.*

§. 2. Let us, in the next place, enquire of *Alstedius*. He distinguisheth concerning *Opinion*, as relating to a more External Court, or to the Court of Conscience: As to the former, he saith, *In Disputations, &c. the Common Opinion is to be preferred before our own.* But as to Conscience, he saith, *Whatsoever is done against our Consciences, is sinful; whether our Conscience be Erring, Opining, or Rightly informed.* *vid. Theol. casuum, cap. 2. n. 2. De Ames, cas. l. 1. c. 5.* determines, *That it is never Lawful for the Authority of other Men to act against our own Opinion, be it certain, or onely probable.* We do not remember more than four Protestant *Casuits* we had, whose Writings are more than forty Years Old. These were three, the fourth was Judicious Mr. *Perkins*, who seems to reduce this to a doubting Conscience, and determines,

That it is sin to act against it, because he cannot act in Faith, if his Conscience be doubting, or erring, or gain-saying.

These being all our former Divines, who wrote Treatises of Cases, further Testimony is not to be expected. It were easie to produce multitudes collaterally speaking the same things. But for them, we shall but refer the Reader to any Protestants, that have formerly wrote upon Rom. 14. 23. and see what they say upon these words; *Who so doubteth, is damned, if he eateth, because he eateth not of Faith: For whatsoever is not of Faith, is sin.* And v. 5. *Let every Man be fully perswaded in his own mind; he will find enough, we pass it over, intending our selves to make some use of that Text anon.*

S. 3. But (as we said before) look as in this very point there is a very great difference, betwixt the *Ancient Fathers* and *School-men*, and the *Modern Jesuites*, in so much, that the latter will not allow the Judgment of any of the Ancients, in these Cases; and both *Vasquez* and *Sanchez* think fit to Caution their Readers against it, and both *Cellot* and *Reginaldus* expressly determine: *That in Moral Questions, the Modern Casuists are to be preferred before the Ancient Fathers, though they lived nearer the times of the Apostles.* So we shall Observe, that some later Protestant Divines have delivered themselves, either something odly, or expressly contrary to the Sentiments of all *Ancient Protestants in this case.* Let us hear now what they say.

S. 4. The Learned Author of the Ecclesiastical Polity, Mr. *Hooker*, in his Preface to it, directed To such as seek Reformation, perswading those whom in that Preface he is Treating, to an end of Controversie, concludeth it not possible to be obtained.

Without submitting to some judicial and definitive Sentence, whereunto neither part that contendeth may under any pretence, or colour refuse to stand:— Ways of peaceable conclusion (he saith) there are but two certain: The one a Sen-

"Sentence of Judicial decision, given to Authority there-
 unto appointed within our selves. The other, the like kind of
 "Sentence, given by a more Universal Authority. The for-
 "mer of which God himself in the Law prescribeth: And his
 "Spirit it was which directed the first Christian Churches in the
 "World to use the latter: this he proves by Deut. 17. 8. and
 "Acts 15. (both which we will examine anon.) Afterward
 "he comes in with this passage. *Neither wish we, that Men*
 "*should do any thing which in their Hearts they are perswaded*
 "*they ought not to do; but this perswasion ought, we say, to*
 "*be fully settled in their Hearts.* That in Litigious and
 "controverted Cases of such Quality, The Will of God is
 "to have them to do, whatsoever the Sentence of Judicial
 "and final decision shall determine. Yea, though it seemeth
 "in their private Opinion, utterly to swerve from that which
 "is right. as no doubt many times the Sentence amongst the
 "Jews did seem unto one part or another contending, and yet
 "in this Case God did not then allow them to do what in their
 "private Judgment it seemed, yea, and perhaps, truly seem-
 "ed, that the Law did dis-allow. This passage must be a lit-
 "tle examined, especially at such a time when there is such a
 "strict scrutiny upon those who seem to have their Faces to-
 "wards Rome; for as on the one side, if this Doctrine be not
 "true, Mr. Hooker, neither in his Preface, nor in his bulky
 "Book (those Oracles we are so Ordinarily sent to) hath said
 "much to perswade those whom he treateth, *That it is their*
 "*Duty to conform;* and our late Writers have said much less,
 "who have thought to jeer, and rail, and Helter Men out of
 "their Religion, and have indeed all built upon this Foundati-
 "on [If the thing be not *Demonstratively evil*, or as others ap-
 "parently evil.] On the other side, if this be true, and be not
 "very cautiously expounded, it over-throweth all Old Practical
 "Divinity, and takes away what we doubt whether ever any
 "considerate Learned Man ever denied, viz. *That the Practi-*
 "*cal Conscience is the proximate Rule of all our Actions.* It
 "sheweth a necessity of an *Infallible Judge*; or if not so, most
 "certainly establisheth *Blind Obedience*, the very Basis and
 Pillar.

Pillar of Popery; yea, of Jesuitisme (the worst of Popery. (for what is *Blind Obedience*, but an Obeying of Superiours contrary to the Light of our own Reason and Conscience.) Nay, more, it is a peg beyond the Doctrine of *Vasquez*, *Sanchez*, *Azorius*, *Layman*, or the boldest Jesuite who ever wrote.

S. 5. I can see but two terms, which can be supposed to regulate this Learned Man's sence by any Sobriety. He saith, onely [in litigious and controverted Causes of such Quality] he should have done well to have told us, of what *Quality*, and what makes a *litigious* and *controverted Case*? Whether some few, or more mens denying, or controverting and disputing a point? For else suppose that in *France*, the King should Command his Protestant Subjects to go to Mass; according to Mr. *Hooker's Divinity*, they are bound to go: why? For (saith he) *It is the Will of God that they should, in litigious and controverted Causes do whatsoever the Sentence of judicial and final decision shall determine.* But will some Advocate for Mr. *Hooker*, say, the Protestants judge going to Mass unlawful. What then? It followeth in Mr. *Hooker.* *Though in their private Opinion it seem to swerve utterly from that which is right. Sit anima nostra cum Philosophis;* Commend us to the *Jesuites*, for none of them speak so broad. And it is well worth the Observing, what Excellent use *Serenus Cressy* hath made of this very passage, in his Answer to Dr. *Pierce* his Sermon, and indeed it is very improveable for their turn. Shall those blind words, *Of such Quality*, help this Father of Conformity: The Question recurs, Of what *Quality*? Can any other *Quality* of Cases be here considerable, but either as the things appear *Lawful*, *Unlawful*, or *Indifferent*. If he means, in Cases appearing to the Person, *Lawful* or *Indifferent*, the thing is granted: But it is impossible this should be his meaning, for he saith, *Though the Command seem to him utterly to swerve from what is right,* If therefore the word, *Seem*, will not help him, he is not to be helped, but must be affirmed to have made the

the *boldest* overture for *Blind Obedience* (the most brutish piece of Popery) that ever Protestant made; and let our Brethren send us no more for Conscience-satisfaction to Mr. *Hooker*, till they can defend him in this *Hypothesis*; and when they have done that, they will have paved his *Holiness* a fairer way into all Protestant Tents, than he ever yet had. Indeed there are various degrees of *Seeming*. A thing may seem to us to swerve from what is right, meerly from *extrinſick Arguments*, because we Reverence the *Learning*, or *Piety* of some that say so; in this ſence it may be true: But this cannot be *Hookers Senſe*; for he ſaith, *In his own private Opinion*. But his meaning muſt be, "That we ought to be fully perſwaded, that in all Litigious, and Controverted Caſes referring to Practice. It is the Will of God that Chriſtians ſhould do, whatſoever the Sentence of Judicial and final deciſion ſhall determine, though that thing determined ſeem to the Perſon required to do it, and that from proper intrinſick Arguments (if not demonſtrative) in the Chriſtians private Opinion, to be quite contrary to what God's Law requireth of him. Which is a poſition ſo contrary, To the Law of Nature, the whole Current of Scripture, the force of Reason, the Liberty of a Chriſtian, and the Judgment of all Proteſtant Divines, that it will ask very good Proof before we ſhall believe a tittle of it true.

S. 6. He offereth a double Proof of it. 1. *Because he ſuppoſeth there muſt be an end of Controverſie*, and that can be no other way. 2. *Because of the Law of God of Old, Deut. 17. 8. and the determination of the Council, Acts 15. guided, no queſtion, by the Spirit of God.* We will conſider both. As to the firſt; Controverſies are of ſeveral Natures. There are *Political Controverſies*, and *Eccleſiaſtical Controverſies*; and theſe either relating to Matters of meer Speculation or Practice. And there are mixed *Controverſies*, partly of a *Civil*, partly of a *Religious concern*.

1. For *Civil Controverſies*, they are of ſeveral Natures; for many of them it is abſolutely neceſſary, in Order to the

con-

consistency of Policies; there should be an end of them, without the end of some of them, the Order of Justice cannot hold; nor Kingdoms and States be preserved: As now, suppose a Controversie about the Title of the Supreme Magistrate, &c. There must be an end to these, and it must be by one parties submission to the final decision of some power. Men may do it without sinning against God: And it is the will of God, even written in Nature, that they should do it. Suppose there be a plea betwixt Man, and Man, concerning a right of Inheritance, and they have had a long Suit about it; there must be an end to this Controversie, and the end must be by a submission of one party to the final decision (at least) of the Supreme Court of Justice in a Nation; Beyond which lyes no appeal. What further can be done, unless this private Person should take up Arms against this Court, and so disturb all Civil Orders? nor shall he who suffers in this Judgment need fear sinning against God, by parting with his Inheritance, no Law of God Obligeth him to keep it. He is before this Judgment, at perfect Liberty to part with it, and by this Judgment it becomes necessary: We fear that we shall anon find the Text, *Deut. 17. 8.* Concerning such Controversies; and so nothing to the purpose in our Case.

2. But there are other Controversies, which are in Matters of meer *Speculation*, or *Practice*. Some things there are, which are meerly Speculative, which infer no Practice, which side soever we take; as now, *Whether the Virgin Mary lived, and dyed a Virgin, &c.* For these Controversies, we know no need of an end of them, nor why they should be Controversies; Men may Opine one thing or another in them, without hazard to their Souls. There are other Controversies in Religion, which being determined, require of us, either an Act of *Faith* and *Assent* from us, as our Duty, or more, *i.e.* the guidance of our Conversation, according to our belief. And these again are either such as are *Fundamentally necessary to Salvation*, or such as are *not so necessary*. As now, suppose that, *Whether Jesus Christ be the Eternal Son of God, is Matter of Controversie betwixt the Arrians, the Socinians,*
and

the Orthodox. Whether a Man may Lawfully adore the bread in the Eucharist, is Controverted betwixt the Papists and Protestants. It is necessary that the Magistrate or Church should put an end to these Controversies, at least, as to the evulging of them, because there is a part in them so necessary to be believed, or done, as Men's Salvation dependeth upon it immediately; and those entrusted with the Charge of Souls, stand Obliged by the Law of Charity, as much as in them lyeth to obviate their eternal Ruine. But there are a third sort of Controversies in Religion, which relate to Practice, in those things, where Gods Word hath left nothing particularly, and *essays* determined. Such Controversies there ever was, and ever will be in the Church. But as it is onely the Pride and Corruption of Men, which makes these Controversies (for why should any Quarrel with his Brother for using his own Latitude, where God hath determined nothing?) So there is no need to put an end to them, but onely to Mens Lusts and Passions in the Arguing of them. For there is no hazard of Salvation, either one way or other. We dare be bold to say, that the silly humour of some, judging it necessary, that all Men should say, *It is a Hen-Sparrow*, when some think it a *Cock-Sparrow*. Or write [it] when some think it is better wrote [yt]. Or that all Men shou'd keep an *Easter-day*; such a day, when as others think it not the right, hath been the cause of so much sin and wickedness, so much Blood and Cruelty, as all that these Humourists are worth, is no way able to recompence either to Gods Glory, the Churches Peace, or the Profit and Advantage of Princes so infinitely hindered by it.

§. 7. We suppose, Peace will be urged as necessary to put an end to Controversie. And is there no other way to obtain it, but by Mens doing *quite contrary to what they Judge right*? The Apostle hath shewed Men a nearer way to it, if their Lusts would let them see it, *Phil. 3. 15, 16.* What a strange fancy it is that there should be no way to Peace, but what is impossible, *viz.* Mens perswading themselves, *That it is*

the Will of God, that in such Cases they should do whatsoever Men determine, though in their own Opinion it seems quite to swerve from what is right: As if there were no way to keep a Man from burning his shins, but by pulling down a Chimney, and setting it further off. This is a sad end. His Most Excellent Majesty hath shewed them a quicker End, viz. Not Enacting the doing of such things of those who judge them Unlawful; but leaving them to their Liberty; and onely requiring, as the Apostle, in such Cases, *Rom. 14. 2.* That he who eateth should not despise him that eateth not; nor he who eateth not, despise him that eateth. Could our Brethren be quiet, and not represent us to the World, as *Factionous Persons, Schismatics; unreasonable, ungovernable, Dunces*, we wonder what hindred Peace now.

§. 7. But, saith Mr. Hooker (and he is the Delphick Oracle it seems in this Case) He must needs perswade himself, That it is the Will of God, That in Litigious and Controversed Cases, &c. he should submit to the Decision of his Superior, though in his own Opinion it seems quite to swerve from that which is right. We would fain know how he should perswade himself of this. This perswasion cannot be of Faith; for where doth the Word of God speak a tittle to this sence? It speaks the contrary, *Rom. 14. 5. 23.* How shall we know a thing to be either according or contrary to the Will of God. Certainly we must know it from Nature, or from Divine Revelation. Doth the Light of Nature shew us any such thing? Indeed in Controversies of a Civil Nature, the Determination of which the Light of Nature shews us must be by Superiours, and where a submission is necessary, and not to be avoyded, without disturbance of Politics, and all Order of Justice: The Light of Nature may shew us some such thing. But certainly, where the Light of Nature sheweth us no need of a Controversie, nor of determining it, if there must be one, it can shew us nothing as to the Will of God, for a submission to such Determination. Nor indeed is it pretended, and it were strange if it should, when the Schoolmen

men determine, *That Alting against an erroneous Conscience* (much more Opining) *is against the Light of Nature.* This piece of the Will of God then which we must (saith Mr. Hooker) perswade our selves of, must be from *Revelation*; and that is either *New* (some Enthusiasm) or *Old*, which is the Word of God. Where shall we find such a piece of the revealed Will of God in Scripture? Mr. Hooker tells us, *Dent.* 17. 8. *Acts* 15. we will Examine both these Texts.

§. 8. The words in *Dent.* 17. 8, 9, 10, 11, 12. are these.

If there arise a Matter too hard for thee in Judgment betwixt Blood and Blood, betwixt plea and plea, betwixt stroke and stroke, being matters of Controversie within thy Gates. Then shalt thou arise, and get thee up unto the place which the Lord thy God shall chuse.

And thou shalt come unto the Priests, the Levites, and unto the Judge who shall be in those days, and enquire, and they shall shew the Sentence of Judgment.

And thou shalt do according to the Sentence which they of that place, which the Lord shall chuse, shall shew thee: and thou shalt Observe to do according to all that they shall inform thee.

According to the Sentence of the Law which they shall teach thee, and according to the Judgment which they shall tell thee, thou shalt do, thou shalt not decline from the Sentence which they shall shew thee, to the right hand, nor to the left.

And the Man that will do presumptuously, and will not hearken unto the Priest, that standeth up to Minister before the Lord thy God, or unto the Judge, even that Man shall dye, and thou shalt put away evil from Israel. These words are fully that Text. As to which, we desire our Reader to Observe,

i. That this is *Bellarmines* first Text to prove *Blind Obedience* the Duty of Christians: So that we may easily judge, which way the Face of these Disputants doth stand. It might suffice but to refer our Reader to *Chamer*, or any that have

Answered *Bellarmino*, for an Answer to this Objection.

2. *Secondly*, In case this Text will serve the turn now, it will infallibly prove the Lawfulness of *Priests* and *Judges* putting to death such as shall not do what they have once determined in any case, that is indifferent of it self, and once by them made necessary. But surely this must be asserted by none that value their words at any rate. But to come close to the Text; if any Argument in this case can be drawn from it, it must be this.

“What the *Israelites* were bound to do, upon any determination by the Priest or Judge in the place where the Lord should chuse: In hard Matters, between plea and plea, blood and blood. That Christians under the Gospel are bound to do, upon the final decision of the Priest or Judge, in hard matters, between plea and plea, blood and blood, trespass and trespass, stroke and stroke.

“But the *Israelites* were bound to do according to the final decision of the Priest or Judge, sitting in the place which the Lord should chuse, and Judging in hard Matters, between Plea and Plea, Blood and Blood, &c. -- Ergo.

If the Argument be thus laid, it concludeth nothing like the Question, but is a *transitus de genere in genus*. Our Question is not about Civil things in Controversie, where a Man may take any part, and not sin against God, and where *Submission* onely inferreth *Suffering* in matters of a temporal concern, but about Religious Actions, where a Practice is required, which the Party Commanded Judgeth sinful: And hazarding the damnation of his Soul. Whence also it may be Observed, That no Conclusion can from hence be fetched from any parity of Reason.

But if Mr. *Hooker* intends from that Text to conclude the Question, his Argument must be laid thus.

“What the *Israelites* were bound to, as to hard Cases, in Judgment betwixt plea and plea, blood and blood, trespass and trespass, stroke and stroke. That Christians are bound to do, in all Litigious Controverted Cases of Religion, or
(at

“(at least) in such Cases where the Superiours Judge the things, by them Commanded, to be in themselves of an indifferent Nature.

But the Israelites, in hard Cases in Judgment, betwixt plea and plea, Blood and Blood, trespass and trespass, stroke and stroke, were Obliged to do according to, and not decline from the Sentence of the Law, which the Priests, the Levites, or the Judges should teach them, and according to the Judgment, which they should shew them, though in the Opinion of their own Consciences it swerved utterly from that which was right.

Ergo. Christians also under the Gospel, in all Litigious controverted Cases, especially of such Quality, where the Superiour Judgeth the things indifferent, are bound to do according to, and not to decline from the Sentence of the Law, which the Civil or Ecclesiastical Superiours, now adays shall teach them; though in the Opinion of their own Consciences it utterly swerveth from that which is right.

To which we Answer, 1. The whole concludeth nothing to the purpose, for it concludeth not that they ought to do any thing contrary to the Sentence of the Divine Law. That was of Old to the Priests a *Regula Regulans*; an Original Rule, and must be so, to all Superiours; and it is impossible any should be Obliged to Act contrary to it. But, lest any should say, they were bound to take the Priests and Levites, and Judges Sentence, to be the Sentence of the Divine Law, we further Answer.

§. 9. By denying the Major, which is most notoriously false, and before it can be made good, those that inherit Mr. Hooker's Spirit, must make good these things.

1. That there is the same Reason, or Equity for Superiours final decision, and a Christians submission as to his Practice, to a final decision in things of a Religious Nature, which the Superiour Judgeth indifferent, and the Inferiour, (from Arguments which in the Judgment of his particular Conscience, seem probable) judgeth unlawful. As there was for a final deci-

decision amongst the Jews, and their submission to such decision, in Matters between Blood and Blood, plea and plea, trespass and trespass, stroke and stroke; which apparently there is not, a determination in the latter being absolutely necessary for upholding the Beings of Politicks, the Course, and Order of Justice, the preservation of Humane Society, and not making the World a Den of Thieves and Murtherers. But no such things can be pretended for things in Religion, by the Superiours owned in their own Nature, but indifferent, and so left by God. Neither is there the same Equity or Reason for the Inferiours Submission. For what harm could the Inferiour have by submitting to the final decision of the Priests, Levites, and Judges, in those Civil things? He might possibly be enforced to put up a wrong, to part with a little Money, or with some part of his Inheritance, or suffer in case of Blood operatly, which was his due by a Divine Law: He was in no danger, by such submission, of damning his Soul, or wounding his Conscience by sinning against God; though he might judge he were severely, or unrighteously dealt with. He might possibly think the part contrary to the decision more just and right: But what was he to do? Nothing, but part with his own Right in Temporal things for the sake of publick Justice, and Order, and Peace, which is every good Christians Duty, and Choice: But here we are required to do some things, and that in so tender a thing, as Divine Worship; which if we do, we shall wound our Consciences, run the hazard of Damnation by sinning, so far as we can apprehend it. Can any one in his wits now judge these two Cases alike? If not, the Proposition is false. There is a manifest Transition in the Argumentation from the Lawfulness of things of one kind, to prove the Lawfulness of things of a quite different Kind, Nature, and Influence.

S. 10. Further, to make good the Proposition, it must be proved, *That God hath under the Gospel erected such a Court, for the final decision of all Litigious and Controverted Cases of like Quality.* For certain it is that Old Court is down; where

where is the Law Erecting the New? Nay, where are the Persons so Qualified for it? Those who know any thing, know that the High-Priests amongst the Jews had an *Urim* and *Thummim*, and so were hardly (in their Judicature) subject to Fallibility, to be sure, less than any now under the Gospel. It was at *Hierusalem*, or at *Siloh*, at the place the Lord was to chuse, where the Ark was, and the Linnen *Ephod*, and the *Urim* and *Thummim*, that this bending Judgment was to be made, no where else. Besides, all know that their High-Priest was the *Type of Christ*, who is *The Truth*; and to whom alone now we reserve Infallibility.

The Papists have a better plea in this Case than any Protestants, because they have provided for it, by Creating to themselves an *Infallible Judge*, and, at least, cheating themselves with such a previous Foundation fit to Build such a Structure upon.

§. 11. We have shewed the vanity of Mr. *Hooker's* plea from the Law, let us see now what he saith from the Gospel. He Observes, that under that, the Spirit of God directed a Court for *Final decission*, *Acts 15*. The Case was this, *Some who came from Judea, had taught the Brethren*, that unless they were Circumcised, they could not be saved; upon this, *Paul* and *Barnabas* were sent, with others, to meet and consult with the *Apostles* and *Elders* at *Hierusalem* about this Matter. Hear their Resolution, *v. 28*. *It seemed good to the Holy Ghost, and to us, to lay upon you no greater burthen than these necessary things; That you abstain from Meats offered to Idols, and from things strangled, and from Fornication, from which if you shall keep your selves, you shall do well.* That in multiplying word we may not lose our Proposition from hence to be proved, it will not be amiss here to repeat it.

That it is the Will of God, that in all Litigious, and controverted Cases of this Quality. (Suppose where the Superiour Judgeth the thing Commanded in its own Nature, indifferent, though the Inferiour from

Arguments which to him seem probable; judgeth them unlawful) that *Inferiours should do whatsoever their Superiours Command, though in their own private Opinion, it seemeth utterly to swerve from that which is right.* This Proposition is by Mr. Hooker made a Conclusion, to be taken *de fide*, upon the Authority of this Text: The Assembling and determination of this first Council. The Argument must lye thus.

"If the Spirit of God directed the Apostles and Elders at *Hierusalem*, in the Controverted Cases of Circumcision, Fornication, and things Offered to Idols, and things strangled; to meet together, and to make a final determination, in reference to Christians Practice: And it were the Will of God, that all private Christians should do according to their determination, though in their own Opinions it utterly swerved from that which was right: Then it is the will of God, that in all other Matters of Religious Practice, that are Litigious, or Controverted, and of such Quality, as the Superiour judgeth the doing of the things in Question, Matters of indifferency, though the Inferiours judge them unlawful: That Superiours should make a final decision, and private Christians should do according to their determinations, though their determinations in their private Opinions, seem utterly to swerve from that which is right.

"But the Spirit of God directed the Apostles and Elders at *Hierusalem*, in the Controverted Cases of Circumcision, Fornication, things Offered to Idols, and things strangled; to meet together, and to make a final decision: And it was the Will of God, that all Private Christians should Practise according to their determinations, though in their own private Opinions, they might seem utterly to swerve from that which is right --- *Ergo*.

Now, to this Argument, the Answer, we say, is not difficult, for neither Proposition is true, or can be made good. But to speak distinctly.

§. 11. First, we deny the Consequence of the Major, and that for these three Reasons.

1. *There is an apparent difference betwixt Apostles, Men guided by an Infallible Spirit, and any other Superiours unquestionably more Fallible than they.* They could not err, the best Council now may err.

2. But Secondly, *there is a vast difference betwixt the cases mentioned in the Text, and other Litigious, Controverted Cases of such Quality, as Mr. Hooker mentioneth: So as there is no Arguing, from the one to the other.* Those mentioned, *Acts 15.* are by the Apostles called *τὰ ἐπιταγὰς*. Things necessary; these we speak of are confessedly *ἀδιάφορα* indifferent, and not necessary; either considered in themselves, or in respect of any Circumstance abstracted from the Superiours Precept; if it be said, That one or two of those things mentioned, *Acts 15.* were but indifferent, *viz. To abstain from blood, and things strangled,* it is easily Answered, *That a thing may be necessary, either with respect to some direct precept (as Fornication, and forbearing eating things first Offered to Idols, was: The Apostle, 1 Cor. 10. judgeth it a participation at the Idolaters Altar) or with Respect to Circumstances, (and those Antecedaneous to the Superiours Precept) thus abstaining from blood, and things strangled were, because of the Jews, who by the Ceremonial Law (the abolition of which they had not yet discerned) were forbidden blood, and by reason of the Converted Gentils eating blood, were much estranged from, and hardened against the Doctrine of the Gospel. Therefore the Apostle calls them necessary; not made so onely by their Command, but made so by this great Circumstance, the doing of them hindring the Glory of God, and his great Design then on Foot.* Now, to Argue from the Authority of Superiours to make a final decision, as to things simply necessary, as forbidden directly by a Divine Law; Or *Accidentally necessary* (being in their own Nature indifferent) made so by some eminent scandal, or mischief, which would plainly follow from

our not disceding from our Liberty in such things, especially too where the things required to be forborn, were before expressly forbidden by a Divine Law. We say, from hence to conclude the Authority of Superiours to make final decisions in other matters, and Command the doing of things never required by God's Law, and confessed to be, neither in themselves necessary, nor in respect of any other Circumstance Antecedaneous to the Superiours Precept, is, (with Reverence to Mr. *Hooker* and his Friends) very wide Arguing, and shooting at a great distance from the Mark.

3. But *Thirdly*, What saith this *Grave* and *Reverend Synod*; *From which if you keep your selves, you shall do well.* They do not say, These things, though indifferent in themselves, you must do, because we have made them necessary by our command, though you in your private Opinions judge some of them utterly unlawful. But we fore-see some will say, That although this Council used a soft Expression, yet it manifestly followeth, *That if they did not abstain from these things, they should do ill.* We Answer, that without Question, if they had not abstained, they had done ill, whether the Synod had so determined or no. The Council did but declare what was the Will of God, *i.e. That Men must not use their Liberty in things indifferent, when the use of it will prejudice the Glory of God, in so high a concern, as that of Converting Souls.* The matter of the Decree here, was not a thing in that state of the Church, in that place indifferent, Antecedaneously to their Decree, but what was every Christians Duty, precedent to the Councils determination. The Council onely instructed them in what was the will of God, not make it *necessary* by their Canon.

2. Again, they were things which the Christians could not possibly judge *Unlawful*; nothing was required but *abstaining*, either from such things as Gods word at that present Obligated them to abstain from, or had before Obligated the Jews to abstain from. If the Christians judged themselves at Liberty to eat of things strangled, and blood, it was impossible yet, they should judge it sinful not to eat of them. Now,
none

none of us will deny, that in Controversies of such Quality, where *known necessary Duties are Controverted, or things necessary eminently with respect to some Circumstances apparent, and unavoidable*; but it is the Will of God, that the Church should consult and declare the Will of God as to them, and Christians ought to hearken, and do according to such their Declaration.

1. Principally; because it is the Will of God.

2. Because of the Churches Authority, Advising or Commanding from God; especially if their required Practice too reacheth no further than a restraint of their Liberty, in doing some things: not doing things, which their Consciences judge utterly unlawful. This is enough to shew the Vanity of the Proposition, or the Consequence rather of the Major Proposition.

§. 12. But neither is the *Assumption* true. No such thing appeareth from *Acts 15*. That the Christians were bound to do what the Synod required [though in their private Opinions, the things required swerved utterly from what was right.] As the things were such, concerning which we before said, the Conscience of none could so dictate. So the Blessed Apostles knew the mind of God too well, to engage Christians to Act contrary to the Opinion of their own Consciences; Nor do we Read, that ever the Authority of this Synod was quoted by the Apostle, in his Epistle to the *Corinthians*, where he professedly, and largely handles one of these Cases, about things Offered to Idols. Doth he tell the *Corinthians* any such thing, as, *It is unlawful for you now to eat such things. It is indeed in it self a thing indifferent, but your Superiours have decreed you should not eat, therefore now it is necessary for you not to eat; the Council of Hierusalem made it necessary.* No such thing, but he useth Arguments proper to Christians Consciences from the Nature of the thing; The Scandal, The Concern of Gods Glory in their forbearance.

§. 13. Thus far we have dealt with the great Champion for the Blind Obedience of Protestants; to whom those unfat-

tisied,

tified, as to Conformity, are sent upon all Occasions, not onely to perswade them that *they may*, but that they are *bound to conform*, and it is *Sin and Schism* (and any thing) if they do not; and we hope, however unanswerable, to be proclaimed: Yet the Candid Reader will judge that he is not such a *Lyon*, but he may be taken *by the beard*, and that without an *Inchanted Hand*. *Multa videntur & dicuntur quæ non sunt*. We have taken the more pains to Examine this New *Discourse* of his about *The Will of God*, and his Arguments for it, because so much hangs upon it, that it being proved *false and absurd*, and his Arguments for it invalid. His *Folio* is of no further use, than to inform Men, and when that is done, they still stand Obligated to Act according to the *abiding Opinion of their own Consciences*.

§. 14. There is yet another *Father*, whom they much rely upon, but (far more sparingly quote in this Case, and there is Reason for it) it is the Reverend Dr. *Sanderſon* (the late Bishop of *Lincoln*) a Man, who though we know he differed from us, yet we must give him his Character. That we have not, nor ever had such another Adversary. He had *preparatum pectus* for an Argument; and seldom determines a Question but clearly, and distinctly. So as though we find him something against us, yet we can understand him speaking to the point, and clearly expressing what he saith. Let us therefore hear him, and where can we better hear him, than in his Book of *Praelections, concerning the Obligation of Conscience*? There he speaketh not by the by, and collaterally, but purposely to the Question, *Praelect. 6.* §. 16 He puts this Question, *What certainty is required in the Mind of the Inferiour to secure him in Conscience, that he is not bound by the Law of his Superiour*? To which he Answereth,

1. *That if the Law be manifestly, and notoriously unjust, the Subject may be sure he is not bound by it; which is also true, if by a Moral certainty he judgeth it simply unjust, having used all diligence to find out the Truth.* This is the Case, what needeth any more? But he goes on.

2. *If*

2. If he doth but think the Command unjust, from some rooted Error in Judgment, of which he cannot easily quit himself; The Obligation of the Command abideth, notwithstanding the Error of his Mind, so that he sinneth, if he doth not Obey; but he should sin in an higher degree, if he did Obey. *Errore illo nondum deposito, whiles he thinks it unlawful.*

3. If a Man doth onely from some light Scruple or Objection suspect the Law unjust, he ought to condemn that Scruple and Obey.

Here is now a Man speaks like a Divine, clearly, and distinctly distinguishing, betwixt a demonstrative certainty, or a certainty of Faith, and a Moral certainty; betwixt the assent of a fixed Conscience, and of an *Opining Conscience*, and Scruple, or Suspicion, and determining Christians Duty in all Cases, and so solidly, that we believe there is no valuable *Non-conformist* in England but will subscribe what he saith: He durst not tell us, *We must believe it the Will of God, we should submit to the final decision of Superiours, though in our private Opinion it utterly swerveth from that which is right*; he understood Divinity a little better. And this we think was his last Resolve in the Case. If his first Conclusion reach not an *Opining Conscience*, which we are sure it doth (if probable Arguments be opposed to Revelation and *Demonstrations*, for then a *Moral certainty* makes but an Opinion) yet we are sure the Second doth. As to both he determines *Acting unlawful*; which is all we contend for.

§. 15. But there is another passage more usually quoted in this Case, in a Sermon which that Reverend and Learned man hath on Rom. 14. 23. which we will consider, though not half so valuable as this.

1. Because but in a Sermon, where he spake to it collaterally.

2. And in a Sermon Preached in his Younger Years: But neither can we find any thing there to their purpose, for, having there determined concerning a *Conscience fully Resolved about the unlawfulness of a thing, viz. That a Man cannot without*

without sin do the thing so by his Conscience judged unlawful. He cometh, in the next place, to treat of a Mans Duty under a doubting Conscience (where we desire the Reader to consider, that he either comprehendeth the *Opining Conscience* under the Notion of the *Conscience fully Resolved*, as one would think by that passage, §. 25. This is now where the *Conscience apparently inclineth one way; but say the Scales hang even, &c.* Or else he quite leaps over the *Opining Conscience*, as not so much concerned in his Text. §. 25. He manifestly speaks not of it, but of such a Conscience (as he expresseth himself) *where the Scales hang even, and a Man cannot resolve which way he should take.* And again, §. 29. Answering the Objection: *I cannot do it, it is against my Conscience.* He saith, *It is not against thy Conscience, for, doubting is properly an indifferent motion to either part of a Contradiction; when the Mind is held in suspense betwixt two ways, uncertain which to take, when the Scales hang even (as I said before) in equilibrio.* This manifestly is not an *Opining Conscience*, but *perfectè dubia*, a Conscience which perfectly doubteth. Now, under such a Complexion of Conscience as to some matter of Practice he determineth,

That if the Liberty of the Agent be determined by a Superiour Power --- A Man is bound in Conscience to do the thing Commanded.

This is a very disputable point in Matters where the Soul is concerned: but be it so or so, it nothing concerns us in the present Debate. That Conscience which we are speaking of is not a Conscience hanging betwixt the two contradictory parts of a Practical Proposition, but upon Arguments which appear to it very probable, (though not demonstrative) strongly inclining to judge one part unlawful, and that the part Commanded, and Morally certain of it. The Question is, Whether this Man can do it or no, because he is not, as *Hooker* saith, *fully and settledly perswaded*, or because, as others say it is, *not plainly, and demonstratively, and apparently evil, tending to debauch Men in their apprehensions of the God-head, &c.* To this *Dr. Sanderfon* either saith nothing,

thing, or speaks quite contrary; for indeed here the Conscience is *repugnant*; in which Case, like a good Protestant Divine, he determines quite contrary to our *Neotericks*, §. 29. *That no Repell nor Circumstance whatsoever can free such an Action from sin.*

§. 16. We find a late *Casuiſt* speaking as honestly. It is Mr. *Fulwood* (whom the *Author of Toleration not to be abused*, declares himself so much pleased with, that he assures us, he is much of his Mind) and it is in one of the three Books he is in such Love with, Entitled, *Some necessary and seasonable Cases*, §. 126. though he adviseth, *That in such Cases where things are Commanded, which the Inferiour Judgeth unlawful, Men should suspect their private Judgments, and read, and search still yet, at last, (saith he) if the thing required appear to thee sinful still. Thou art bound to the Peace of thy own Conscience, Gods Vice-gerent within thee, and thou mayest not Obey.* How come we then to be *Felons de se.* and *Sacrilegious*? Stealing our selves out of the Ministry, when this is plainly the case. Nothing could be spoken more truly, or like a Divine; and it speaks the more honesty in Mr. *Fulwood*, because in saying this he spake against himself, kicking down all the good Milk, which his *Conformable Brethren* thought he had given in those three Books.

§. 17. We find another Recent *Doctor*, in a Pamphlet, called *Pulpit Conceptions: Popular deceptions*; nibbling, and but nibbling at this most important Question, p. 61. He forms an Objection thus.

But suppose I should Scruple my Obedience, thinking my Superiours impositions to be against the Command of God: Why, in this case I am Obliged to lay aside my Scruples, and to bring such thoughts into Captivity to the Obedience of Christ, who hath commanded me to Obey those that have the Rule over me. *Pulpit Conceptions*, p. 61.

Right.

Right. But had we been any of us at this Doctors Elbow, who thus dictates, we would have told him, *Doctor*, this none will deny you; but they are not *Scruples* that are in our way, but great *Massie stones*, called *Dialectick Arguments*; yea, almost *Mill-stones*: that is, we have not only a Jealousie, or Suspition, or Fear, that the thing may be unlawful: But we are as sure of it as we can be of any thing, that it is not *pius* said in Scripture, nor the Object of our Sense, nor demonstrable from certain and necessary causes. Good *Doctor*, speak to the purpose; may we Act against the Judgment of our Consciences, made up from these, or no? The Men you deal with in that Book, are many of them Men of great Learning and Reason, whose Arguments none in their wits will think you have Answered in that Book. What shall be done in this case, *Doctor*? Speak to the point. Is there nothing to do, but *up and ride* your pace? Where's the *Siirrup*, we see the Whip, but we see not that. *Scrupulous Doctor*, you know it is a *little stone*, a thing without the Foot (much like an *Ipse dixit* for an Argument to prove an action Lawful) if a Man indeed hath such a thing in his shooe vexing his Foot, it is an easie thing for him to pull it out, and ease himself, and run presently. But suppose a Man hath the *Gout*, or some *intrinsic Humour*, which Lameth him; is it no more than to say, *up, and Run*? Good Doctor, he must be cured first, I hope. The *Divines* which you have to deal with, have such impediments, *intrinsic Arguments*, which maketh the unlawfulness of the things required very probable to them. If you will call them *Scruples*, they cannot help that, but they are no more of Kin to hem, than a grain of Sand is to a Mill-stone. They are ready to Argue the Case with you at any fair Barr of any Reformed Church in Europe: You have their Arguments: Against *Set Forms of Prayer to be imposed upon all Ministers*, in Mr. Cottons *Discourse against Set Forms*. Against the Ceremonies, in Dr. Ames his *Fresh Suit*, In the *Dispute against English Ceremonies*, in Mr. Bradshaw's Books. Against *Re-ordination*, in R. A. his Letter to a Friend, Printed 1661. and

A Serious Review of Presbyters Re-ordination by Bishops, Printed about the same time. As also in *Altare Damascenum*, upon the two first Heads: Besides many other Books they could never yet see Answered. What shall these Men do? You hear what they say; you say nothing, but rail at them, and conclude them *peevish, wilful, ungovernable*, without Answering an Argument, but taking it for granted (as a late Triumphant Author) that they think all Lawful, onely Scruple offending their Party. Will you tell them as you do, p. 61, 62, 63. *That Melior est conditio possidentis. He that is in possession hath the better Interest, and that he is possessed of his Right in Commanding, is unquestionable; and therefore they are bound, in Conscience, to stand to his Command, till it be evinced that his command is of a thing that is sinful, or above the Sphear of his Authority.* Alas! they will presently grant it you, with this difference. They will tell you, they will not say, their Superiour Commands things which are *apparently, and demonstrably sinful*. But the things Commanded are *to them sinful*, being such as their Consciences so Judge, and that from Arguments which appear to them highly probable, enough to beget in them a Moral certainty. You gag them at the Press, what you can, but they have found times from thence to tell you what those Arguments are; what is their Answer? You are a Company of *peevish, factious, Schismatical Fellows*. Is this Righteous dealing? Or had not these kind of Answerers, think you, need of some *more Righteousness* than their *own works*, to justify them? They will presently grant, That the Superiour is possessed of an unquestionable Right to Command in such things, as God by his Word hath not forbidden, either by some *particular word*, or by some general Law, requiring every one to use their Power derived from God, *for good, for Edification*, not for *Destruction*; to use it so, as not to *destroy Souls, for whom Christ dyed*. And to all such Commands, they profess themselves ready to stand.

And further, when you have proved, that either the Word of God, or right Reason hath put the Superiour in a *possession*

of a larger Right than this is. They will tell you, That the *King of Spain* is in a possession too of a Right to Command; so was *Queen Mary* here in *England*, who Commanded many things, she, or her Bishops, or both; which *Cranmer*, *Hooper*, *Ridley*, *Latimer*, &c. in their Consciences judged unlawful; how was it *Evinced* (to use your term) to those and other good Men, that what these their Superiours Commanded, was unlawful? The *Bishops* affirmed them Lawful, so that (according to the Modern Divinity) the *unlawfulness* of them could be but the Sufferers private Opinion, and that against the Church. Did these Men sin, in not doing the things required? Did they dye as Fools dye? Or did they do their Duty in chusing to Suffer rather than Act? If the latter, why may not others do the same? Will you say, because those things to the Martyrs were *evinced* unlawful. We ask, how were they evinced? Did they plead Scriptures against those things, and do not the Non-Conformists do so now? Had they not a far greater appearance of Scripture for *Transubstantiation*, in that Text, *This is my Body*, than any can bring for a *Liturgy*, a *Surplis*, &c. Will you say, the Scriptures now pleaded, are wrested, and mis-understood? Would not *Bonner* and *Gardiner* say so then? Shall the Magistrate now determine betwixt the Bishops and dissenters? And had not *Queen Mary* the same Right? Or (at least) she and her Parliament? See where you are, Doctor. Who shall Judge whether your opposite Objections be *Scruples*, *Doubts*, or *Opinions*? Shall the Supreme Magistrate or the Bishops? Had not *Queen Mary* and her *Bishops* the same Right? And then all those Holy Men dyed, as the Papists say, as *Rebels* and *Traytors*, and those things were all suffered in vain. You have no way to avoid this, unless you will say, *Queen Mary* and her Bishops were no Superiours; for you know, *Quod convenit alicui quâ tali, convenit omni tali*. But it may be when this *Doctor* writes next, he will think himself Obligated to speak strictly, and not confound, a *Doubling*, *Scrupulous*, and an *Opining* Conscience. Any School-man, or Casuist will shew him the difference betwixt them.

§. 18. The last we shall take Notice of, speaking in this Case, is one, who calls himself *Ireneus Freeman*, in a Treatise filed by him, *The Reasonableness of Divine Service*, p. 33. he telleth us right. *That there are but a few Actions but are disputable; and ----- In disputable Actions, we must Obey our Superiours Commands.* This is now right down, that is, *There are very few Actions, but let our own Consciences say what they will to us against them, if our Superiours Command us to do them, we must do them: Or say what they will for them, if the Magistrate Command us to forbear them, we must forbear them.* In p. 15. Those he had to deal with having said, that it was not clear to them, *That it was Lawful for all Persons at all times to limit themselves in Prayer by any stinted Forms,* This acute Author roundly tells them.

“The Lawfulness of an Action is not clear to him that
 “doubteth of its Lawfulness, not being certain that the Action
 “is Lawful, nor yet certain that it is unlawful. But yet such
 “a Man is bound to do the Action when Commanded by the
 “Magistrate. The Reason is, Because it is certain the Ma-
 “gistrate is to be Obeyed, Commanding Lawful things. But
 “it is uncertain whether the thing be unlawful; it is safer to
 “Obey doubtingly, than to disobey doubtingly.

Now, in these words, there is either a *Notorious Cheat*, or else a *Potion of Divinity*, which taken down, will bring up all our *Protestant Religion*: If there be a Cheat, it lyes in those words, *Doubting*, and *Certain*: A Conscience may be said to be doubting, either *strictly*, or *largely*. Strictly, *Bishop Sanderfon* tells us what a doubting Conscience is; when the Mind is pendulous, the Scales hang even: a Man hath as much to say for the Lawfulness of an Action, as for the unlawfulness. Largely, One that is meerly Jealous, Scrupulous, or Suspicious of an Action, may be said to doubt.

2. One that is not fully persuaded a thing is unlawful, but upon Arguments, which he judgeth very probable, he believeth it unlawful. Again, a Man may be certain of a thing, by a certainty of Faith, believing a *Divine Revelation*, or by a certainty of Sense, or arising from *Demonstration*.

2. A Man may be *Morally certain*, and of most things we have no other certainty than this latter. If this Author had not designed to cheat his Reader, he would have spoken distinctly (as we shewed Dr. *Sanderſon* did) when he speaketh of *Doubling*, he must either say nothing to the purpose, for he knows his Adversaries have given him Arguments, which appear to them very probable why they Judge the things required unlawful. Or else he must mean, that if a Man hath any *doubt*, and be not *fully perswaded*, that the Action is unlawful, though he hath never so many Arguments, which make it appear to him probably such: Notwithstanding them, he is bound to do the thing. Now, if this be his Sence, he saith that which is not to be made good by any but Mr. *Hooker's* Principles, before spoken to, and that which I will think never any Protestant spake before him. For his Rule of *Tene certum, relinque incertum*; besides that, it must be understood of the two parts of the same Proposition, not of two distinct Propositions (as he wrings it.) By his leave *that is not uncertain*, of which we are *Morally certain*.

Nor 3. Is it certain, or can be to any Soul, either by *Faith*, or *Mathematical*, or *Morally*. *That the Superiour is in all things to be Obeyed*: Nay, the contrary is certain. Nor is it certain that he is to be Obeyed in things, which *the Inferiour*, upon Arguments which he judgeth very probable, judgeth unlawful for him to do. For his confounding the Notions of *Disputable*, and *uncertain*, it is ridiculous; for if all things *disputable* be therefore *uncertain*, because they are disputed, and that by some Learned Men too, whether the particular Soul, dispute them or no. There's hardly an Article of our Faith will be left us *certain*, or indeed any thing else but one-ly this, *That we must Obey our Superiours*. In the mean time, Reader, Observe whither these Modern Casuists are driving.

1. *There are few Actions* (he might have added Propositions too) *that are not Disputable*, Freeman, p. 33.

2. *In Disputable Actions we must Obey Superiours Commands*, *ibid.* p. 15.

3. Yea,

3. Yea, we must Obey, though we doubt, *i. e.* though upon Arguments which to us appear very probable; we think the things unlawful to be done, because *it is certain* (saith *Freeman*) *That Superiours are to be Obeyed in things Lawful, and in disputable things it is uncertain that what is required is unlawful.*

4. Ergo. *There are very few Actions, but if we be Commanded this or that part, let our Consciences say what they will, we must do as we are commanded.*

§. 19. These now are Doctrines not fit to be openly, and plainly asserted in this Noon-day of Truth. Therefore the particular Judgments of Private Persons, Founded on Arguments, which to them seem very probable, and insert a Moral certainty, must be confounded with the Notions of *Doubts, Scruples, Fears, Jealousies.* Let this Doctrine obtain a little, and let the World Judge, if the exploded, brutish, odious Doctrine of *Blind Obedience* (the Pillar, and Basis of *Popery*) be not by slight of hand established. The Consequence of this Doctrine, if true, would be this, *That Men need no more look to Scripture, to see whether an Action were Lawful or no, but look upon it as the Will of God; to believe as the Church believeth, and do as their Superiours command, without any regard to the command of God.* Of this, more anon.

§. 20. The Advantage of this Doctrine (pretended) is *Peace*, by which they can mean no more, than an outward Harmony in Action.

2. *The stretching the bounds of Morality.* For, if two successive Superiours Command me the two contradictory parts of the same Proposition: One Commands me to go to Church: Another, to tarry at home, and I am bound to Obey in things disputable; it must follow, that all things in the World that are disputable, are *indifferent*. Now, there being (as Mr. *Freeman* saith) *few actions not Disputable.* It must follow, that there are few *Practical Propositions*, but a Man,

Man, as to them may do what he list, take what part he pleaseth; so all things shall become Lawfull. But now the woful dis-advantage of it, is, that he who practiseth according to these Principles.

1. *Shall be sure to have no Peace in his Conscience, but a continual regret within himself.*

2. *He will be at last damned. For (saith the Apostle) he that doubteth, is damned if he eateth, Rom. 14. Except somebody can prove what hath been impudently enough said, That Superiours must another day answer to God for all the sinful actions which their Inferiours have done at their command, (a Doctrine no Superiour hath cause to thank them for.) Nor is there any way to avoid the first, unless it were possible for Men to perswade themselves, as Mr. Hooker would have them, That it is the Will of God, that in Litigious and controverted cases of such Quality, Men should submit to the judgment of final decision; though in their private Opinions they Judge it utterly to swerve from that which is right; as to which we have said enough. We therefore stick to the Protestant Doctrine, That it is not Lawfull, under any circumstance of Command, to act against an Opining Conscience.*

CHAP.

C H A P. IV.

The Question stated; It is proved, that it is not Lawful to Act contrary to the Opinion of a Mans particular Conscience, by five Arguments; because the particular Conscience is the Proximate Rule of Action, granted by all Divines. Because of that Text, Rom. 14. 23. Because it Subjects a Man to continual Terrors of Conscience. The contrary Principle over-throws the Natural Order of the Souls Operation, and plucks up a great Pillar of the Protestant Religion, and would make the Scriptures and Argumentative Books of little Use but to Torment Men.

§. 1. **W**E come now to assert our Proposition, That it is not Lawful for any Person to act against an Opining Conscience, i. e. (as we have largely opened) That, supposing a Person, though he hath not demonstrative Arguments, to prove this or that unlawful, which he is required to do: Yet if he hath formed up a particular Judgment of Conscience, from Arguments, which seem to him *very probable*, so as he cannot Answer them, nor rest satisfied in the Answers of others, while he so judgeth, it is sin and wickedness in him, especially in Matters which concern the Worship of God; to do that Action, however required of him. This we shall make good by several Arguments.

§. 2. 1. To swerve from what God hath made the Proximate Rule of our actions, is sinful. But to act contrary to the Opinion of our own Conscience, is to swerve from what God hath made the Proximate Rule of our Actions --- Therefore it is sinful. The Major can with no Modesty be denied; for, what is sin, but a Transgression of, or deviation from the Rule of

our actions? The *Minor* is as Evident. It is granted by all *Divines* we have met with, both *Popish* and *Protestant*, that the *Practical Conscience* is the Proximate Rule of our Actions; nor did we ever meet with it denyed by any Learned Man. And indeed it must be so; For, That *Gods Word and Law* is the *Remote Rule*, must be owned. Now, we would ask how we shall know what *the Will of God in his Word is*, but by the Judgment of our *particular consciences at last*; be the Will of God in it self what it will: The Will of God to us must be Interpreted as to Practise by our own *Judgments and apprehensions*. Hence Dr. *Ames* saith well, that he who acteth against his Conscience, *Interpretatively acts against the Will of God*. And *Filiucius* saith right; such Actions declare, that Men chuse, and love sin: For so far as they know what is sinful, they do sin; and if they mis of sinning in their Actions, it is but as the blind Man hits the Crow, there's no thank to them; out of choyce they sin: *It is involuntarily*, if they do that which is right. No Action materially good, can possibly be so formally, if done contrary to the Judgment of our Conscience; because it is impossible it should have the concurrence of the Will, whiles the *Practical Conscience* saith it ought not be done. The *Will* cannot will what it judgeth evil, it may indeed be mis-guided by the Understanding, but it cannot will evil, *sub ratione mali*; and so consequentially cannot will what the Conscience telleth the Man he ought not to do. So as indeed it is but a Natural Principle, *That the Practical Conscience is, and must be the Proximate Rule of our actions*. *Filiucius* saith right, that the Law of God, and the Law of Nature respecteth our Actions as they are free, which they cannot be, unless they proceed a *Principio cognoscente*, from a knowing Principle within our selves. We proceed to a second Argument.

S. 3. *That Principle, which allowed perverteth the whole Order of Nature in the operations of a Reasonable Soul, must be false. But this opinion, That it is Lawful for us to act contrary to what appears to us Lawful, from probable arguments, perverteth*

perverteth the whole Order of Nature in the Operations of a Reasonable Soul --- Ergo. The Major needeth no proof to any who will believe, that it is not the Will of God, a Man should be Metamorphosed into a Beast. So that all our business must be to prove the *Minor*. To which purpose let us but take a view of the Noblest Empire in the World, I mean, that of Reason in Man; and Observeth the Order which God hath (by the Law of Nature prescribed) by which Reason, sitting as a Queen, should Rule there.

The Will is the great *Minister* in this State, the great wheel, which by its imperate Acts moveth the whole Man. The Object of it is *Good* or *Evil*; about these two it is Exercised, chusing the former, refusing the latter, and then Commanding all the Inferiour Faculties of the Soul, and Members of the Body, to move according to its Judgment and Choicē. The *Philosopher* telleth us, *The Will is blind*; and that its work is onely to keep its Seat, and Judge, and Command. The Understanding serves it with the Notion of things that takes cognisance of them, discerns, and represents them as true, or false; whether reference to Speculation or Practice. The Understanding in its work is served by the *Interior* and *exterior Senses*. So then this is the Order of the Reasonable Soul in Man, whereas all Objects are either *Sensible*, *Rational*, or *Spiritual*. The exterior Senses, the *Eye* and *Ear*, &c. bring Intelligence of sensible Objects. The *Fancy*, *Memory*, and *Imaginative Power* bring Intelligence of Objects proper to their Sphear. The Understanding takes notice of all Propositions thus brought in to it, discerneth them, and judgeth concerning them, whether they be true or false according to Principles of *Sense*, *Reason*, and *Revelation*, according to the variety of the Matter; upon this the Will maketh its choice. Those which the Understanding discerneth true and good, it willet and chuseth; what it discerns false and evil, it refuseth, nillere, and rejecteth; and accordingly Commandeth the Soul to believe, or not believe; to love, or hate; to desire, or flee from whatsoever the Understanding discerneth, and judgeth evil and

noxious. Here now is the Government of a Reasonable Soul. Now, let us Observe how guilty the Principle we oppose is of *Treason and Sedition* against this *Noble Government of the Soul* instituted in it by God himself. We cannot make a better Judgment, than by putting a particular case. Suppose this the Proposition.

It is, or it is not Lawful for Persons once Ordained to be re-ordained.

The Case now is to be Judged in the Court of Reason.

1. *The Senses* bring in this Proposition; as what they have somewhere *seen or heard* to be brought into Practice. Upon this the Court of the Reasonable Understanding taketh cognizance of it. The Understanding discerns it a Proposition relating to *Instituted Worship*, and that the Truth concerning it, is to be determined, not from *Principles of Sense*, or *Principles of Natural Reason*, but from *Scripture and Reason* working upon things Revealed, and *comparing things Spiritual with Spiritual*. The Eye is therefore employed to Read what can be. The Ear to hear on all sides what is spoken about it. The Fancy or Imagination is also set on work to find out *Mediums* to prove the one part or other, and so the thing cometh with all these helps to be Discourfed by the soul within it self. Then the *Understanding* discerneth and judgeth which part of the Proposition is true, and consequently, fit to be Practised; which is false, and fit to be rejected. It either concludes one part *Demonstratively, and certainly false*, or *probably, and in all likelihood false*; or else it hangs in *æquilibrio*, not knowing what to determine. In the present Case we suppose the *Understanding* to bring in its report in this Sense.

Ast to this Practical Question, *Whether it be Lawful for them, who by Ministers have been Ordained and made Ministers, to be re-ordained, and made, first, Deacons, then Priests, by Bishops.*

I have done my best to try the Truth or Falshood of either part. The *Eyes* and *Ears* have given me an account of what they have seen in any Books, or heard from any Discourses of
Learned

Learned Men about it. The *Fancy* hath also been employed to weigh, and consider Propositions to consider Arguments brought by others on one side, and the other; and devise *Mediums* for one part, and for the other. Now, upon my utmost Judgment of the thing from weighing Arguments on all sides, it is not demonstratively certain, that th's Proposition is false. *That Persons once Ordained, may not be re-ordained*, and that a *Submission* to such a re-ordination would be sinful: But it doth appear to me very probably so; I cannot Answer the Arguments which I have thought on, or others have brought to prove it so; and though I dare not arrogate infallibility to my self, and determine the Arguments I have for the Negative unanswerable; yet I can find no Answer I can acquiesce in, and so far as I can judge, it is sinful; and will certainly issue in *horror of Conscience*, or *Eternal Damnation*, or both, without pardoning Mercy. Now, the business is ripe for the *Will's* Election. What shall the *Will* do? Shall it, can it (notwithstanding this) chuse the thing, and command the soul, *to will, desire, embrace it*, or the *outward Man* to do it, because it is Commanded. If this be not to turn a Man into a Beast, to turn the Rational soul out of doors, and set a Man with his heels upward, and to pervert the Natural Order of the Souls Operations, we know not what is?

§. 4. Will any say, the Case is here partially represented, because under the Circumstance of *Superiours Command*. The Understanding hath also a report to bring in about that Proposition, *That it is by Divine Precept necessary to Obey Superiours*. We Answer, if the Proposition be laid down so Universal, the Understanding must either *Deny it*, or *distinguish* about it. It must therefore be onely laid down thus.

In all Lawful things it is necessary to obey Superiours.

Now, it hinders not, for this is τὸ ἐν ἀρχῇ this is the Question, whether the thing be Lawful or no: The Soul judgeth otherwise. Now, we would gladly know of our Modern Casuists, *Whether the Law of Nature having obliged the Will*

to move according to the dictate of the Understanding, is be possible that a rational Soul without presumptuous sinning, and offering violence to the very Law and Principles of Humane Nature, should, will, chuse, command, or allow a thing so represented to it as before, probably unlawful. What we cannot apprehend good, I hope we cannot will it, for this were to will evil under the Notion of evil (a thing Naturally impossible.) Now, how shall it judge that good (being to take all its Evidence from the Intellect) which the understanding judgeth false, and naught? Will any one say, that it is possible that from extrinsecal Arguments (such as the Authority, and Testimony of Men, the Will and Command of Superiours) &c. it may judge that true and good, which from intrinsecal Arguments, it judgeth false and naught. This is indeed the Jesuites Doctrine. (Yet they will not allow a Superiours *merum imperium*, a sufficient Topick in the case) but as was said before, it is justly abominated by all Protestants, of what sort, size, or perswasion soever.

§. 5. *Ex abundantia*, if any will be so vain, as to say, the Soul hath warrant enough to judge the thing *probably Lawful*, because Superiours have Commanded it; when in the mean time from Arguments appearing to it very probable, it judgeth it sinful and unlawful. We would gladly know, from what Principles it should form such a Judgment; the Principle must be one of these.

1. Either these Superiours are Infallible, so am not I in the Exercise of my Reason. So indeed the Papists hold, as to the Pope, and so may be justified in their perverse Judgments in this case from that Maxime, *Ενός αἵματος δοθέντος ἧ ἀλλὰ ἐπίστα.* Granting one absurdity, a thousand will follow: But all Protestants reserve Infallibility from him, who is Truth it self, and deny it to any Creature.

2. It must therefore be this Principle: *Though Superiours be fallible, yet it is better their Judgments* (though in following them there be a danger of a troubled Conscience, and eternal damnation) *than my own.* But is it possible an inge-
nuous,

nuous, Rational Soul should so Judge? This being neither sensibly, nor rationally demonstrable: It is impossible that the Soul should apprehend any such thing but upon *Revelation*. It must therefore (as *Hooker* saith) appear to be *The will of God*; and to that (as to the highest Reason) (if it can be shewed) Reason Sanctified and Regulated by Religion, will submit. But alas! who shall shew us any such Text? *Ante retro Simois fluit*, &c. Will they urge *Rom. 13. Let every Soul be subject to the Higher Powers*, and other Texts of the like import. We allow the Scripture, we say, the matter to be our Duty, but we say, it must be in things which do not appear to us sinful and wicked (this were to set up some higher than the highest?) Otherwise the Apostles, *Acts 3*: much erred, not only in their Practice, but in their Principle too there laid down, *It is better to obey God than Man*: In vain had they said that, if every Obedience to Man as a Superiour were, *eo nomine*, Obedience to God, will any say? But *this was where a Magistrate Commanded a thing unlawful*. How did that appear, but by the dictate of their Consciences? It indeed now doth otherwise appear to us, because the Scripture so represents it since written; but how did it appear to them otherwise? Why might not the Magistrate have then told them, as some now Interpret that revealed will of God to us. *He that doubteth, is damned, if he eateth*; that is, (except his Superiour Commands him to eat.) And why might not *Nebuchadnezzar* have told the three Children, It is true, God had forbidden them to Worship Graven Images, but it must be understood, *except the Magistrate Commanded them so to do*: But this Objection is too ridiculous to Answer further. Let this be enough for our Second Argument.

§. 5. We proceed to a *Third Argument*, which we form thus.

For any Person to do that in the doing of which he can never have any quiet, and peace in his own Conscience, is sinful and wicked.

But for a Man to Act (under any Circumstance) contrary

to the Opinion of his own Conscience, is to do that, in the doing of which he can never have any quiet, and Peace in his own Conscience. --- Ergo.

We are much at loss to fancy which Proposition any can be hardy enough to deny. Will any deny the *Major*? Surely Charity begins at home; and every Man, in the first place, is bound to keep *Quiet* within himself, if he can. *Thou art bound to the Peace of thy own Conscience. Thou canst not Obey* (saith Mr. *Fulwood*, in the place before cited) a very remarkable Sentence for the Author of the *Doltrine of Schism*, to think upon professing so much oneness of mind with Mr. *Fulwood*, in that Book) and certainly, he is the greatest Self-destroyer in the World, that doth not first look in his Actions, to secure the Peace of his Conscience. Next, throwing a Man's self into Hell, the greatest mischief he can do himself, is to set his Conscience upon a continual belching in his Face.

§. 6. For the *Minor*: It is as plain, for he must have a dull, a very dull and lazy Conscience, that will let him Act contrary to its Judgment, and yet be quiet, and not continually tell him, thou subjeatest thy self to the wrath of God, thou sinnest wilfully, presumptuously; and there is nothing remains for thee, but either a quick Repentance, a sorrow for what thou hast done, and a leaving off to do it any more; or a certain dreadful looking for of Divine and fiery Indignation.

§. 7. Will any say, why should not a Man's Conscience be as unquiet while a man contrary to the Command of God for Obeying Superiours, doth not Obey them? The Answer is easie. No Law of God Obligeth a man to Obey Superiours in things which he verily believeth are unlawful; about other things we have no Dispute. This Argument is so Evident, as it needeth not more words. We therefore proceed to a fourth.

§. 8. *He that doubteth is damned, if he eateth ; and whatsoever is not of Faith, is sin, Rom. 14. 23.*

But he who doth that, which upon probable Arguments he verily believeth unlawful ; doubteth, and yet asserteth and asserteth not of Faith. --- ergo he sinneth, is damned, &c.

The Proposition is the Apostles, *Rom. 14. 23.* therefore not to be denied ; but yet we find some, who will not allow it a Proposition of immutable Truth, but with some Circumstances. That is (as they expound themselves) if the Person be *sui juris*, at Liberty, and Perfectly in his own Power, not required to do the thing, by the Command of his Superiours, of the Lawfulness of which he doubteth : But (say they) if the Superiour Commandeth, then he who doth the thing, (though he doubteth of the Lawfulness of it) runneth no guilt, no hazard of *Damnation*. Now, we would fain believe this if we could, for it would ease us of many perplexing thoughts, but we cannot, for these Reasons, amongst others.

§. 9. First, because *what the Apostle saith, seemeth to us but to be according to the Law, and Order of Nature in a rational Soul*. That the Understanding should first represent that as true, and good, and therefore *Eligible*, which the Will should chuse.

§. 10. Because *it seemeth to us possible by admitting their Interpretation to elude the whole Law of God, and make any thing Lawful*. For what Reason can there be, why what God saith in one place, should be understood with that limitation, and not what he saith in another? Why may we not *Venerate Images, Go to Mass, Pray for the Dead, Prophane the Sabbath, Use Oyl, Spittle, Cream, &c. in Baptism*, if the Superiour Commandeth, as well as *wear a Surplis, use the Cross in Baptism, &c.* Doth any one doubt whether these things be Lawful or no, or upon probable Arguments, believe the contrary? And is he restrained by this Text? Not

at

at all by this Interpretation; if Superiours Command these, or any of these things, will any say, *That this Text speaks of things only in their own Nature indifferent*? We ask, who shall Judge what those things are? Shall the Superiour? If so, what we said, holdeth; for it is not to be presumed, he would Command them, if he judgeth them sinful. Shall the Inferiour? He Judgeth them from probable Arguments Unlawful.

§. 11. Thirdly, Because (whatsoever some Modern Doctors say) *We see no Scripture Translating the guilt of any Personal Action of ours to our Superiours, which in Reason we should find, if his Command would Justifie us, in doing any thing we judge wicked.* Especially considering, that whether we Judge it right or no, it may in it self be sinful, and therefore we had need have our Souls secured, as to the guilt of it. We think, with the Apostle, *that Sin is an Anomie*; a transgression of the Law, by Omission, or Commission, or Non-conformity, how we believe, that there is an inseparable guilt which he cleaves to every *Omission* or *Oblique Action*: every sin bindeth over the *Doer* or *Omitter* to an *Eternal death*: and want one Scripture to prove, that the sin, or Personal Obliquity of an Inferiour Action, should be Translated to the Superiour, and set upon his score: Thus while some deny Christs *imputed Righteousness*, they have devised a new Doctrine of *Imputed guilt* to the Magistrate or Superiour; a Doctrine which no Superiour will thank them for, that understandeth the weight of Divine wrath for sin. We have heretofore heard, that Superiours may make themselves guilty of sin, by Commanding others to sin: But that the guilt of the *Inferiours Personal Action*, should also be Translated from him, and that not to *Christ*, but to the Superiour, is a Novel, idle Fancy, a brutish, and irrational, as well as unscriptural figment, and such a one, as if admitted, would make the *Crowns of Kings*, and *Mitres of Bishops* not worth taking up in the Streets. Let God therefore be true, and these New Diviners all Lyars; God hath said, *That Soul that*
sins,

sins, shall dye, and that every Soul shall bear its own Iniquity; and Iniquity that must be (if St. John describes sin right) whatsoever is a Transgression of the Divine Law.

§. 12. *Fourthly, We cannot admit of this Interpretation, because of what followeth in the Apostle, Whatsoever is not of faith, is sin.* By Faith, saith Dr. Sanderſon, in his Sermon on Rom. 14. 23. is meant, "*A Certain perswasion of the Mind, that what we do, may Lawfully be done; that (saith he) whatsoever Action is done by us, either directly contrary to the Judgment and Verdict of our own Consciences, or, at least, doubtingly, and before we are in some competent measure assured that we may Lawfully do it; that is it which St. Paul here denyeth to be of Faith, and of which he pronounceth so peremptorily, that it is (eo nomine) sin.*" Now, we are sure, that he who doth a thing at the Command of others, which seemeth to him (from probable Arguments) unlawful, cannot, in this sence, do it of Faith, i. e. with no competent perswasion of the Lawfulness of it, with no certainty, either *Supernatural, Mathematical, or Moral.* The Vanity therefore of this limitation being discovered, we hope the Proposition will stand good.

§. 13. For the *Minor*, he who denyeth it, must say, *That he who Opineth doth not doubt*, which indeed we think strictly he doth not; for he hath, as we said, a *Moral certainty*, but that doth but raise the Argument to *à fortiori*: If he, whose Conscience is pendulous, and who hangeth in *Equilibrio*, is damned if he doth the thing, of the Lawfulness of which he doubteth; then is he much more damned, who doth verily think the thing unlawful, and yet will do it. But in the largest Notion, Opining is a *Species of doubting*; and if that Text of the Apostle be true, of *Doubting*, in any sence, it must be in that sence, which is of all, the highest. We are able to discern no chink, at which our Adversaries may creep out from the Prison of this Argument, but shall leave it, attending to any thing they shall any of them hereafter offer in Answer to it.

§. 14. Our next Argument shall be this.

That Principle which destroyeth the Pillar and Foundation of the Protestant Religion, is not to be granted by those who own that Religion.

But to assert it Lawful under any Circumstance, to Act contra-

ry to the Opinion of a Mans own Conscience, destroyeth the Pillar and Foundation of the Protestant Religion --- Ergo.

We confesse this is but *Argumentum ad homines*, and concerns not those whose business is to oppose, and Root up the Religion of Protestants; but we are speaking to *Protestants*, who cannot deny the Proposition.

For the *Assumption*, all that we have to do, is to prove that the Asserting of this Principle, destroyeth, at least, one of the Foundations of the Protestant Religion, as it stands distinguished from Popery. Th's is that, which Divines call *The Judgment of Private and Practical Discretion*. Divines say, there is a three-fold Judgment concerning Propositions of Truth.

1. The first is *Authoritative*, or *Nomothetick*. This belongeth onely to God; all the Men in the World, all their Opinions and Arguments cannot add a *Cubit to the stature of Truth*, nor make an *hair of its Head* either *white or black*.

2. The Second is *Ministerial*, and *Declarative*. This belongs to the Church (in the Scriptural Notion of it.) The Apostle therefore calls her *the Pillar and ground of Truth*: She keeps the Sacred Records, and when there is a doubt about any portion of them, Ministerially declareth what is the Truth.

3. The third Divines call, *The Judgment of Private and Practical Discretion*. This, Protestants say, belongs to every private Christian, who, by his own Conscience, (using the best means first which he can for the Information of it) is to determine (as to his own belief and Practice, what is true, and Lawful. And indeed here lyes the great difference betwixt the Religion of *Papists* and *Protestants*. The *Papists* will not allow the Private Christian to Judge of Truth with reference to his own Practice, but Obligeth People *To believe as the Church believeth*, and defendeth *Blind Obedience* to Superiours as Christians Duty. They make it Lawful for Men, contrary to their own Judgment, and the Dictate of their Conscience from intrinsick Arguments, to Practice according to the Opinion of one or more Doctors, and necessary to Obey all the Decrees of the *Popes*, and the Commands of Superiours, if things be not *apparently* and demonstratively unlawful. It may be one *Adrianus* or another, or two may enter their dissent to this Brutish Doctrine, but they do generally agree it, and this is *Fons & Origo mali*. The very first thing

thing to be taught their Profilytes, (as silence was in the School of Pythagoras.) Hence their *vernacular Bibles* are burnt, and all their other Doctrines are easily swallowed. The necessity of an Infallible Judge is Concluded, &c.

§. 15. On the other side it is essential to a Protestant to be free and in Bondage to no Man, nor as to his Practice to be guided by any but God alone, and his own Conscience, and his Superiours Commanding him what his own Conscience first perswades him to be necessary, or, at least, Lawful. He who denyeth this, and pretendeth to hate Popery, doth but *abhor Idols*, and *commit Sacrilege*. Nay, he doth indeed but deny that in words, which he owneth, chuseth, and preferreth; nor is it possible, there should be greater Factors for Popery in any place, than those that perswade Men, that it is Lawful for them under what Circumstances they can Imagine to Act contrary to the *Opinion* of their own Conscience, and do what (from which to them seem very probable) seems *utterly to swerve from that which is right*, (to use Mr. Hooker's Phrase.)

§. 16. Now, let any pluck up this Flood-gate of *Private and Practicall Discretion*, and tell us what should hinder most of the absurd Doctrines of Popery coming in upon us like an *overflowing Flood*, if ever we should be so miserable (which is not a thing impossible) as in Future Ages, to have a Superiour that shall Command the receiving of them, or Practice according to them. As to the falshood of most of them, we have but a *Moral certainty*, at least, our perswasion must be Judged no more according to the *Modern Divinity*; for how can we be Infallibly, and demonstratively certain in things, as to which so great a part of the World is of another mind, and so many such Learned Men, as Bellarmine, Stapleton, and an hundred more, who dissent from us? Besides, as we shewed before, we are told, that in *Disputable things*, we can have but an *Opinion* of one part. And this we take to be a *Meditation* worthy of those *Honourable Persons* amongst the *Nobility and Gentry of England*, who have shewed their Zeal so much of late against that *Religious Pageantry of Rome*. If any doubt whether Christians have such a Priviledge given them by God, as this of *Private and Practicall Discretion*; let them consider those Texts, 1 *Thes.* 5. 21. 1 *John* 3. 1. usually quoted for it; and but Read what Bishop *Davenant*, in

in his most Learned Treatise, *De Jndice & Normâ fidei*, and all other Protestant Writers have said for it. Whoever plucks up this Hedge, we understand not if he doth not feel the *Romish Serpent* quickly biting him by the heel; and we cannot but think that Man will be *Cursed*, that goes about to remove this *Land-mark* of all Protestants; and cry out to our Superiours, in the words of Solomon, Prov. 22. 28. *Remove not the Ancient Land-mark, which our Fathers have set.*

§. 17. We might further add, that the admission of this *absurd and brutish* principle, that if a thing be not *apparently and demonstratively* sinful, it is Lawful for Men to Act *contrary to the Opinion of their own Consciences*, representing it to them (from Arguments, which seem to them very probable) unlawful. All Books of Topicks, as to Matters of practice, all Argumentative Books in Divinity would be of no Use at all, but noxious, and mischievous rather: Yea, the Holy Scriptures themselves would be of very little or no use for the use of Argumentative Discourses, in any Science or Discipline is to make a proposition either *Demonstrative*, or *Probable* to us. Yea, this is the use of the Holy Scriptures, as they inform us of Truth. Things are Demonstrable to us upon the Evidence of *Revelation, Sense, or Reason*, (indeed the first is improper, for the certainty arising from Divine Revelation, is called *Faith*, not *Demonstration*, or *Demonstrative* certainty, but it is *quiddam majus*, what is certain to us upon a *certainty of Faith*, or *Demonstrative Reason*, is not so Ordinarily in a *moment*. This Certainty is Ordinarily hatched out of Topicks, and most Propositions even of Divine Truth usually at first appear to the Soul *probable*, before they appear indubitably certain. The Gray hairs of that other certainty (which is distinguished from *Moral Certainty*) rarely grow up in a Night. This being granted, which every one experienceth. Suppose but a *Convocation*, or a *Colledge of Superiours*, to determine *de Omnibus agendis*, of all things to be Religiously Observed, and done. To what purpose should any read, or study any Books for the disquisition of Truth, as to any part of a Proposition; for when he hath done, so long as the thing to be done appears to him but *probably* Lawful, or *probably* unlawful, which it must do before it appears to him indubitably, and out of all Question the one, or the other, he is according to this

Opinion

Opinion bound in Conscience (if he be by Superiours Commanded) to do quite contrary to what he Judgeth Lawful, if he be not indubitably certain it is unlawful. What need he Read and study the Scriptures, as to Matter of Practice? When he hath found out the most he can there, some or other will dispute the Truth of what he thinks he hath found out; and if so, it is disputable; and if it be disputable, his Notion is not indubitable (according to this Novel Doctrine) and he is bound to do what he is bidden. So as his Notion shall be crush'd in the Egg, and never be suffered to hatch into a Demonstration, or indubitable certainty, and all his Reading for the finding out of the truth, shall serve for nothing but to torture him, with a continual regret, and checking of Conscience, which will never let a Man be quiet whiles he Acteth in Repugnancy to it. Will any say yet, he shall do well to *Read*, to perswade himself of the Lawfulness of what he is Commanded. Suppose another Superior should then come and Command him the quite contrary (as he may doubtless.) But it may be some will say, so long as he by Reading onely perswades himself it is *Lawful*; not necessary antecedaneously to the Superiours Command, he is well enough; he may first Obey the one, then the other: But how shall a Man be able so to govern himself, as by Reading to secure himself that he shall not convince himself the thing is necessary? Thus according to this absurd position, we may part with all the practical part of Scripture, and, as the Popish Profelytes use to do, burn our Bibles, onely excepting some few Precepts about *Obedience to Superiours*, in that will lye the whole Duty of Man, for whatever else the Scripture saith (unless in things unlawful, according to the Law and light of Nature) must be expounded with a *Salvo*. *This you must not do, except Superiours Command. This you must do, unless Superiours Command the contrary.* If not all Scripture, we would willingly know where these Divines will set the Limits? Will they say (as indeed they do) *it is onely in things in their own Nature indifferent*; this looks like something, but is indeed nothing: Who shall be Judge of those things which are so? Shall the Inferiours Conscience, as to his practice, be Judge? Then the Question is granted on our side. Shall the Superior Judge, for the Inferiours practice? Then the Limitation signifieth nothing. How any will get out of this Noose, we cannot

not Divine; but enough is said in this case, we Conclude it *an absurd, unreasonable, unscriptural, Popish, Brutish Assertion*, for any to affirm it *Lawful*, for Christians under any Circumstances, in Matters of Worship especially, to *Act contrary* to what in the particular Judgment of his own Conscience, formed from Arguments which to him appear very probable, he Judgeth to be *Lawful* from intrinsecal Nature, affections, and adjuncts of the Action Let us now shortly enquire what inconveniencies our Opinion in this case is incumbered with, or are charged upon it.

C H A P. V.

The Grand Objection answered. This Principle doth not take away all Power from Magistrates, nor at all dissolve the Bonds of any due Obedience. The Magistrates Power opened, granted, limited; he hath no power to Judge as to the Inferiours practice, what is, or is not indifferent. The strange variety of conformable Writers, in stating, and determining the Question. The Reasonableness, and Necessity of Indulgence. Dr. Ashton's late Book examined, his Notion of Persecution inquired into, the true Notion of it. An Introduction to the next Case.

§. 1. **T**HE Common and Grand, and we think, the onely valuable Objection against this Proposition, is, *That this Principle taketh away all power from Superiours, and dissolves all Inferiours Obligations to Obedience; and this we hear of often enough, and it were Objection enough if it were but half true. But let us go down into this Field, and see whether the Principle be so guilty, according to the Cry against it. That which they Offer in Justification of this, is, "That the World is now grown so cunning, that there is hardly any thing which can be Commanded by Superiours, but the Wit of Man will find out some probable Arguments to prove that it is unlawful, which if it be once so proved, the Inferiour is discharged from his Obedience. Again, they say, All things are either Necessary, Lawful, or Unlawful. for things Necessary, and unlawful, let Superiours Command what they please, the Inferiours must not Omit things necessary, nor do things*

"things unlawful. If the Superiour holds his Peace, the Inferiour must do the former, and forbear the latter; so as the Superiour hath onely a proper power as to things indifferent. Take away this, and you leave him nothing. This is the strength of what we find said here and there in more words.

§. 2. In Answer to both which we say, 1. That it is most certain that God hath not set up Superiours for Nothings, there is in them a Power, and a great Power to Command, and Obedience to their Commands is a Duty, a great Duty. This is not Disputed betwixt us; now to open wherein the Power of the Magistrate lyes, we say, 1. That the Magistrate being as a God to us, and God's Vice-gerents, his first and great work unquestionably lyeth in seeing that the Commands of God be fulfilled, both his *Moral Laws*, and his *Positive Laws about Divine Worship*; and this alone (if his Power were no more) were not onely a Noble Employment, but full, and sufficient to employ the Head and Hands of any Mortal Man in any large Jurisdiction.

2. Whereas as to the Government of Political Bodies, and Matters meerly Circumstantial concerning the Worship of God, which are yet necessary to the upholding of Politie, and the administration of Justice in them; and without which, in Matters of Religion, the Worship of God either could not at all be performed, or at least, not so performed, but that in the Eye of Common Sense and Reason it would be Judged by the most, disorderly and indecently performed. In these things Gods Word hath onely generally determined, and the Superiour hath a confessed Power in these things (which even the highest Non-Conformists will grant) to make particular Laws in these things; and indeed rightly considered, these are but *Laws in things necessary*, though not *Originally*, yet upon supposition of the general Commands of Scripture. 'Tis one thing to Create *Order and Decency*, another thing to Command that things be done in the Church *Decently and in Order*. The *Decency and Order* of things in Religion neither must nor can arise but from the *Law of Nature*, the *Common sense of Christians*, and the *particular guise and Custom of places*. Now, the Magistrate hath an undoubted Power to Command Circumstantials of *Order and Decency*, that is, which are truly so, antecedent to his Command. Is this no Power, and proper to him, think we?

3. We say, that if the Superiour Judgeth a thing thus necessary in pursuit of the general Rules of Gods Word, if they indeed be so, the Inferiour is bound in Conscience, *to do*, or to *omit them*. If the Superiour *only Judgeth them so*, it is his Duty to Command them. If the Inferiour cannot Judge so of them, if he Judgeth them in their Circumstances, but such as he may do, or Omit, he is bound to do them, or omit them (according to the Nature of the Superiours Precept.) But if the Inferiour Judgeth them unlawful for him to do, though this his Judgment be formed but from probable Arguments (that is, such as to him so appear) not from indubitably certain Arguments; he cannot *Obe*y, but is bound patiently to submit to the penalty imposed upon him for Disobedience. So that these Objections are perfectly vain, and no incumbrances at all upon our Proposition.

§. 3. But we say, It is one thing for us to allow a Power in Superiours to determine us, where both we and they agree the thing in its own Nature, and cloathed with such Circumstances, of a middle and indifferent Nature; And quite another thing for us, (and that as to the things of God too) and such things, where for doing, or not doing, the danger of sin and Eternal Damnation lyeth, to make him *Our Judge* what is, and what is not *Indifferent*. It is impossible any intelligent Soul should allow the latter to his Superiour without also making him *a Judge both of Good and Evil*. For *Indifferency* being a middle betwixt those two *extremes*, there's no possibility of his being a Judge of it without also determining concerning the extremes. And if we could allow this, we should as to private Christians use see little need of the Scriptures, for the Superiour must Interpret them too, or all will come to nothing.

§. 4. Nay, we further say, that there may be some stresses of Providence, as to which the being of Politics, and the Preservation of Justice lyes at stake, where some things may be Lawful which in Ordinary Cases God will not allow. *You know* (saith our Saviour) *what David did when he was an hungry, how he did eat the Shew-bread, which was not Lawful for any (in Ordinary Cases) to eat, but for the Priests only*. It was a Case of real Necessity to save his Life: It would have been a sin, both in *David*, upon a lighter pretence to have done it, and for the Prieff to have suffered it.

§. 5. We

§. 5. We have been the more willing to search this business to the bottom, because of that audacious Liberty, which some have taken, either openly to assert, or cunningly to insinuate the contrary; a thing (undoubtedly) of as ill a tendency as can well be imagined, leading directly to a *Blind Obedience*, one of the Capital Errors of the *Church of Rome*, and possibly a more sottish, and brutish Errour, than any other which they have, as deverting Man of his Humane Nature, and that which is the Mother of most other of their abominable Doctrines, any absurdities, as Naturally following that first, as the Thread follows the Needle: If it can be supposed, that there may be a Superiour absurd in his *Sentiments* or *Practice*; which that it may be, we need no other Evidence than what the Infallible Choyce it self hath given the wiser part of the World often enough Evidence of.

§. 6. We have been amazed to Observe how tenderly Modern Writers have touched this Question. Mr. *Hooker* indeed, as we have before said, is peremptory enough against us, to that degree as we find none of his Posterity in that thing approving his saying. The Author of the *Pulpit Conceptions*, *Popular deceptions*, fairly skips it over, telling us what should be done by us, if we scruple our Obedience; but not a word what we should do, if we from probable Arguments judge the thing unlawful. *Freeman* (as we shewed before) is peremptory enough beyond all *Reason* or *Religion*. But another, writing a Book professedly about *Tenderness of Conscience*, when he comes to Answer the Case of Doubting, speaks almost to every thing else, but (prudently) leaves out this Case. Others tell us, that if the thing Commanded be apparently, *demonstratively*, *indisputably evil*, if it tends to *debauch us in our Sentiments concerning the God-head*, &c. we must not Obey; but if otherwise, either they say nothing, or else tell us we ought to Obey. The Reverend Bishop *Sanderfon*, and Mr. *Fulwood*, are the onely two Modern Divines that we have met with, daring to state the Case distinctly, and speaking to it in the Dialect of Protestants. But others, in their Writings, either shew little of *Divines*, stating the Case falsely, and not speaking *ad idem*. Or little of *Protestants*, saying that which no Protestant Divine ever durst say before them.

§. 7. And from hence to every considerate Reader, will be inevitably

inevitably concluded the *Reasonableness*, if not the *Necessity* of an *Indulgence* from all *Superiours*, who will think themselves under any Obligation to the *Royal Law of Love*. For as that Law will Oblige them *not to suffer sin in their Inferiours*, Lev. 19. 17. So it will also Oblige them not to lay a *stumbling block before them that are weak*, by which they both *sin against Christ*, 1 Cor. 8. 9, 10, 11, 12, 13, and do not walk *Charitably*, Rom. 14. 15. Nor yet *to make them to suffer*, because *they dare not sin*: For to Act against their Conscience (though but *Opining*) is sin. For all this Suffering must unquestionably be a *Suffering for Righteousness sake*, for to depart from Iniquity is unquestionably a piece of Righteousness. Hence though the Superiour upon the first Account be bound to Oblige his Inferiours by his Civil Sanction, to do all that which the Law of God hath made *necessary* for them to do, and to forbear what the same Law hath forbidden, otherwise *he should suffer sin upon them*: Yet if he thinks fit to Command other things in Religion, which (possibly) himself, and some of his Inferiours Judge *not sinful*, and tendent to some State or *Decency*, but the want of them makes not the Service *indecent* or *disorderly*, according to any Light or Law of Nature, or the general guise and Custom of the place; and many other his Inferiours Judge so far from tendency to *Order* and *Decency*, that they from Arguments, which to them appear very probable, judge them *sinful* and *unlawful*, and so capable of no such Notion, how he can possibly exact an Obedience to any such Commands, without

1. *Either putting his Inferiours upon sin, and continual disturbance of their Consciences.*

2. *Or making them Sufferers, because they dare not sin against God*; which is (as we said before) a *species* (at least) of *Suffering for Righteousness sake*. We must confess our selves (which possibly is our weakness) not Divines sufficient to underitand, and should thank any one that could inform us. Now, betwixt these there lyeth no *Medium*, but a *Gracious Indulgence*, the very Remedy, which His Most Excellent Majesty hath suited to this sore Evil.

§. 7. And here we would have finished our Discourse, but for a late Book, called, *The Cases of Scandal and Persecution*, which yet hath no such depths in it, as to ask us long time to found.

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The Author spends one part of his Book, in perswading us to believe what we know none ever doubted, viz. That in Case the thing Commanded us be by us Judged Lawful (for that he begs all along) we ought not to forbear doing it, because some of our Brethren would be grieved and teachy at it, provided our doing of it laid no stumbling-block before them, to give them Occasion to sin against God. We would fain know what Non-Conformist ever said the contrary. Thus Men Exercise themselves in Combates with fancied Enemies, for really the Doctor hath none in this Case that ever we heard of. The Second Part of his Book comes nearer what we last said, and notwithstanding all he saith, we do think, That it is at least a *Mute Case* (as they say in Law) Whether the forcing any to Suffer, because he cannot, or dare not *Alt* contrary to the Opinion of his Conscience, guided by Arguments, which to him appear probable, be not Persecuting. To pass by his other impertinencies, allowing him to use a very true Method to try the issue, in fixing the Notion of Persecution, we there joyn Issue with him.

§. 8. In his 44 p. he tells us, *Persecution is an Insulting of outward temporal Evils for the Exercise of true Religion.* The Genus we agree, and think he might have shortned the Description by leaving out *Outward and Temporal*, because no Man can Inflict any other Evils upon his Brother. The difference he makes to lye in those words [For the Exercise of the True Religion.] But why might not our Saviours terms have been taken, for *Righteousness sake*? Yet if *Religion* be taken in the larger Notion of it, for doing any part of our Duty, in which we bounden to towards God, we cannot fault the Description; but this Description makes but the *Major Proposition*. The *Minor* must be this, [But the *Outward Temporal Evils*.] *Imprisonments, Deprivation of Ecclesiastical preferments, pecuniary mulcts, Slandering, Revilings, Reproachful speeches.* Insulted upon Non-Conformists are not insulted upon them, for doing any part of that Duty, wherein they are bounden to God. There are very many Non-Conformists will put the Doctor to prove this, and tell him, It is a piece of *Righteousness*, a part of *true Religion*, and every Mans bounden Duty toward God, not to *Alt* contrary to what his Conscience, Gods Vice-gerent, in him, tells him, and that upon Arguments which appear very probable to him, is *Lawful*. And in

Matters of Gods Worship also to do according to what his Conscience tells him is the Will of God he should do. And we take Notice too of an Excellent passage in the Doctors Book, p. 45. *l. ult. & penult.*

"That God hath as much Right to appoint the way of his Worship, as to be Worshipped. A passage we are so much in Love with, that it is one of our greatest Topicks to prove many things Commanded us probably unlawful. Prayer is Worship: Praying by Forms, or by words formed first in our own Hearts, is a way of Worship. Now, say we, God hath as much right to prescribe the way as the Worship, and hath done it. As every Man hath received the gift, saith the Apostle, so let him Minister, 1 Pet. 4. 10. Praying and Preaching are Worship. The doing these Acts in a peculiar Habit appropriated to these Actions, is a way of Worship: And God (saith the Doctor) hath as much right to appoint the way of his Worship, as the Worship. The like might be said of the other Ceremonies.

§. 9. But suppose we allow the Doctors Description of *Persecution*. The next Question is, how we shall know what is *True Religion*: Who shall be the Judge? Shall the Scriptures? But who shall Interpret the Scriptures as to a Christians private Practice? Shall the Superiours? Then certainly there was never any *Persecution* in the World: For it were very uncharitable to presume, that any Superiour should punish another for the Exercise of what himself owned to be the true Religion. We have more Charity for Bonner himself. Shall the Inferiour be Judge what is true Religion? Then I fear the Doctor will be cast; many of them will say, they are *mischievously, and violently Prosecuted, Imprisoned, Punished, Reviled*, for what they Judge the Exercise of the True Religion.

§. 10. The upshot of this Discourse is, that who they be, who are truly guilty of *Persecuting*, will not be determined till the Day of Judgment, when God shall determine, which was the *True Religion*; and whether Men truly ran those hazards, because they were afraid of sinning against God. In the mean time, as to us, he is *Persecuted*, who can truly say, *That he suffers for doing any thing, which he thinks he should sin against God if he did not do; and for forbearing any thing, which he truly thinks he should sin against God if he should do.* And we believe, that

that those who thus Suffer, though another day they shall be adjudged by God to have been in a mistake, and so not Persecuted, yet as to what they have done, will be Judged guilty of no more than an Humane Infirmary.

§. 11. We have so much Charity, as to believe, that that *Popish Priest* who suffers according to the Law, for *Seducing*: If he can truly say, that he did believe, Gods Word Obligated him to do what he did, may properly enough say he is *Persecuted*; but we also believe, that God will not Judge so another day, and that the Magistrate doth but his Duty; because by Gods Law none ought to be endured that entice others to *Idolatry*. But who so makes another to Suffer because he durst not sin against God, Acting contrary to what his Conscience judgeth unlawful from probable Arguments, we believe far less excusable, because there's no necessity upon him to lay any such Commands, and enforce them by any such penalties. But there does lye a necessity of suffering in this Case upon the Inferiour to avoid sinning against his Conscience: whether his Conscience be in the right or in the wrong, will be determined another day. In the mean time he should sin, if he should not hearken to it; to avoid which, he suffers, which is so far as he can possibly Judge to suffer for *Righteousness sake*. After the saying of which we think little more need be said to the Doctor's Book.

§. 12. To Conclude our Discourse upon this Question, we have observed in all those almost who have wrote for Conformity, great insisting upon the Authority of former, and present Churches, and the Testimonies of many Divines, dead, or alive; some of which they tell us were *Old Non-Conformists*. And this hath been the general Method of all late Writers almost, to pass over all our, and our Fore-Fathers Arguments, and in Order to make us as odious to the World, as they would have us; to represent us as singular, and differing from the Church in all Ages, yea, from our selves, and our Fore-Fathers, &c. To what better purpose than this, these in-artificial Arguments are used we cannot tell, unless those that bring them have a little tincture of the *Jesuites* Doctrine we before shewed at large;

That extrinsick Arguments may make an Action appear probably Lawful; though at the same time from intrinsick Arguments, we Judge it probably unlawful.

A Pill so nauseous, so brutish, as it is impossible we should swallow it, till we have vomited up our rational Souls. And 'tis the more odious to us because it is of such affinity to the detestable *Blind Obedience* of the Church of *Rome*. But to defeat these men of any hopes of prevailing by such *Mediums*, we will shortly enquire into another Question, though not the same, yet of great *Cognition* with this which we have now so largely discussed.

CHAP. VI.

Second Quest. *Whether it be Naturally possible for any Person in a Practicall Proposition to judge that part probably Lawful from extrinsick Arguments; the contrary to which he at the same time Judgeth probably unlawful from intrinsick Arguments.* The Question opened. The Opinions of *Vasquez*, *Sanchez*. The Negative part of the Question maintained, because this is contrary to the Principles of a Rational Soul. The Conclusion.

§. 1. **W**E have had Occasions once and again to hint the known distinction between *Speculative and Practicall Propositions*: Divines call those Propositions *Speculative*, whose use and advantage is onely terminated in Speculation and Knowledge, and from whence nothing in Practice is Directed. They call those *Practicall*, whose end is the guidance and direction of the Practice. But *Speculative Propositions* must be again distinguished into such. 1. *From which no Obligation ariseth to the Exercise of any rational Act of ours*: Such as these. *That there was such a City as Troy, such a King of France, as Pipin, &c.* with a thousand such like. 2. Such, the Truth of which inferreth the performance of some Rational Action of ours, and such as is our Duty towards God, as these. *That the Scriptures are the Word of God. That Christ is the Eternally existent Son of God.* But our Question relates to none of these, but to such Propositions onely where the Question is, *Whether it be Lawful for me to do this or that, or no*: This is that we mean by a *Practicall Proposition*.

§. 2. In our Discourse upon the former Question we have also often

often hinted, what we mean by *Extrinsic*, and *Intrinsic* Arguments. The singular Judgment of every intelligent Person's Conscience is formed from some Arguments, drawn either from Principles of Reason, or Propositions of Scripture. These Arguments are either from plain letter of Scripture, or Principles of Reason accounted Infallible, which fix the Conscience. Or else they are drawn from Logical Topicks, and called *Dialectick Arguments*, or *Probable*: For *Optimus Philosophus nondum nascitur*. We say, These probable Arguments are again either *Intrinsic*, called *Artificial Arguments* by the Logicians, fetched from the Causes, Effects, Consequents, Adjuncts, or other Affections of the Subject or predicate in the Question. 2. Such as are meerly *Extrinsic*, Logicians call them *In-artificial*, because every Dunce may bring them, they have no Art at all in them. Divines call them *Extrinsic*, because they are Foreign to the inward parts of the Question, and the Soul that brings them. These are such as are fetched from Authority and Testimony of others; Testimonies of Fathers, School-men, former, or Modern Divines, &c. Now, it is demonstratively Truth, That it is possible, that a soul should have a great many Arguments appearing to it very probable, and such as it cannot Answer, and scarcely believes that any other can, to prove a thing unlawful; and at the same time meet with many Testimonies and sayings of Fathers, Councils, School-men, Casuists, Ancients, or more Modern Divines, speaking the thing Lawful. It is the Case of the *Non-Conformists* this day. Though they meet not with any Fathers, Councils, &c. who judge the things Lawful, which they do judge unlawful; yet many present Divines they do meet with, yet they cannot but from *Intrinsic*, *Dialectick Arguments* think the things utterly unlawful.

§. 3. Now, the Question is, in this Case, what they shall do? They do not deny but it is their Duty, upon the Testimonies of Superiours, and their Commands; or hearing the Judgment of so many Learned Men of another Mind, to examine again their own Arguments, and to try them to the utmost: But supposing at last (which is the Case) the things yet seem to them from very probable Arguments unlawful, what shall they do? They may (say the Jesuits) do such things, or not do them: For this is the Jesuits help against the abominable absurdity of Acting contrary to

an *Opining Conscience*. They say, While it is but an *Opinion*, a Man may *Opine* both contradictory parts of the same Question; the one upon *Intrinsic*, the other upon *Extrinsic* Arguments; and although (as we shewed before) the *Opinion* which is formed upon *Artificial*, proper, *intrinsic* Arguments must needs be more probable; Yet they say, a man is not tyed up to *magis* and *minus* in the Case. It is ground enough (say they) for any man to act *Conscientiously*, if the thing appear any way probable, he is not bound to act according to that which he judgeth more probable. So that, say they, if a thing appear probably *Lawful*, by *Extrinsic* Arguments the *Opinion* of some *Doctors*, &c. we may do it, though at the same time we judge it never so unlawful from *Intrinsic*, *Artificial* Arguments, fetched from all the *Topicks* in *Logick*, and *affectiō*ns of the subject, and *Prædictate* of the Question.

§. 9. The Case is so weighty, and this *Opinion* so unmanly, and *Brutish*, that it is reasonable we should bring forth one or two, who shall vouch for themselves and their Brethren, that this is what they say and hold. Let *Vasquez* (a Man of no small repute amongst them) speak first, out of his *Disput.* in 12^a, *disput.* 62. *Cap.* 3. n. 11.

“*Tertio Observandum est, cum qui habet assensum unius partis propositionis, per propria & intrinseca principia etiam si assensus ille tantum sit probabilis, non posse habere assensum alterius partis per intrinseca, & propria principia: bene tamen posse per externa principia existimari oppositam partem esse probabilem. v. plura ibid. & cap. 40. n. 15.*”

Sanchez sings the same Song, *Op. Moral.* l. 1. *cap.* 9. n. 12. “*Ultimum fundamentum est ut duas Opiniones edimetro sibi contradicentes idem intellectus judicet probabiles, aut aequæ, aut alteram probabiliores*; he shews this is according to the *Opinion* of *Azorius* and *Vasquez* (before quoted.) And then goeth on, telling us, that he seeth no Reason, but the same Understanding may judge the contradictory parts of the same Proposition both probably true, or false; lawful, or unlawful; and that Experience proves it. But this is surely a Note above *Ela*, and a Riddle in Philosophy. The *Jesuites* being pinched with that obvious Argument, That then the same Soul, and at the same time, and the same thing may assent to contradictions; and blow hot and cold, bless and curse, with the same breath: They think to avoid it by telling,

telling us, that the Understanding affirmeth neither part, we wonder how it should *Opine* then?

§. 10. This is a great point in *Popery* (*Jesuitisme* especially) and of no small gain to them, for by this means they can resolve Cases as they list, absolve Mens Consciences as they please, and Interpret the Law of God into a very pleasing consistency with the Lusts, and Passions of all Men: If it were admitted for true, it would open a wide door for Men to do what they listed, without any check or controul of Conscience. There being but few things in practice, which one Doctor or other, under one Circumstance or other, hath not judged Lawful. *There are few actions but are disputable*, saith Mr. Freeman, in his *Reasonableness of Divine Service*, p. 33. And if one or more Doctors affirm it lawful (say the Popish Casuists) the private Christian may assent to it as *probably Lawful*, though at the same time, from *Artificial* Intrinsic Arguments, formed in his own Breast, he judgeth it probably unlawful. And we wish, some professing themselves *Protestant Divines*, did not cant after this Tune (though it may be they will not as the Papists) rest it upon the Opinion of *one Doctor*, But many Learned Men; if they did not a little linger after this, we cannot tell what means their constant choaking of us, with the *bare Opinions* of others contrary to ours, in which surely we are no further concerned, than as quickned by them to re-examine our own Intrinsic Arguments more strictly.

§. 11. We must declare our selves in the Negative of this Question, and do affirm, "*That it is Naturally impossible for a Rational Soul, in a practical proposition, to Judge that part from Extrinsic in-artificial Arguments Probably Lawful, which, at the same time, from Intrinsic artificial Arguments, formed in its own Breast, it judgeth Probably Unlawful*"; and in this Judgment we are confirmed.

§. 12. Because it is contrary to the innate Principles of a reasonable Soul. 1. We suppose every one will without difficulty grant it a Principle of a Reasonable Soul, *To Conclude nothing but from Rational Foundations: Reason is a Power within us, Discouraging Conclusions from Principles*. It acknowledgeth there is a God, and that he hath revealed his will in those Books which we call *The Holy Scriptures*, and must acknowledge it the most reasonable thing imaginable, that he should be acknowledged true in his word.

Hence it concludes many Propositions of Faith, upon the bare Authority of God revealing them, and exerciseth it self no further, than to compare *Spiritual things with Spiritual*. But having not that Evidence for other things, it maketh use of *inbred Notions*, and from those Principles raiseth Conclusions. Now, let us consider from what Principle it is possible, that Reason should infer such a Conclusion as this.

That is probably Lawful for me to do, which such or such Divines (be they more or fewer, more or less Learned) think is Lawful; or which Superiours require (under that Notion) notwithstanding any Artificial, Intrinsic Arguments which make my own Conscience Judge it very probably unlawful.

It must be this: *Those Doctors, or those Superiours, know better than I.* Doth Reason in a man allow any such conclusion? Modestly indeed upon such an Account, may make a reasonable Soul Jealous, and Suspicious, and to issue out a *Writ* for a better enquiry upon its Arguments, but it is impossible that it should rest in such a Conclusion to guide its Practice, where the hazard of the Eternal Felicity of a Soul is concerned. Reason speaketh in the Language of Job to his Friends, Job 12. 3. *I have Understanding as well as you; and be it what it will, gradually compared with all the Doctors reason, it is the Candle of the Lord set up in my Soul, according to the Light of which I must walk.* Or in the words of Elihu, Job 32. 8. *There is a Spirit in Man, and the Inspiration of the Almighty gives him Understanding.* Reason saith, *Bring forth your strong arguments, and I will answer them; or hear mine, and do you answer me.*

S. 13. Besides, Reason saith, If this were belonging to all Doctors, or all Superiours, that Wisdom (as Job saith) *must dye with them*, how is it they are not agreed amongst themselves? Such, and such are on my side; if it doth not agree to all Superiours, and all Doctors, how shall I be assured, that it more agrees to those on the adverse side, than to those on my side; to Dr. Vasquez more than to Pope Adrian?

S. 14. Further (saith Reason) do not I know, and see, that there are many *Doctors*, who are not *Docti*, and that many Learned men in all Ages have been in Factions? doth not Dr. Vasquez himself tell me, in 12. disp. 62. Cap. 4. *That he cannot deny but a whole rout of Doctors may embrace an Opinion without any Reason, against whom*

whom (saith he) another Doctor of great Authority may bring in to the Schools; an Opinion maturely deliberated? Vasquez need not be Credited, if we did not upon Experience find daily, that not one of many Doctors examines things, but follows some Leader, as diligently as Sheep do one another over an Hedge; that many either understand not the true Question, about which they will be Writing in this Age, or of choice mistake it, & write far more passion than Divinity, or Reason, which made Vasquez, & some others of his Brethren deliver their Opinion, That a Learned Man may act according to his own Opinion, though contrary to the Opinions of other Doctors.

§. 15. Reason tells a Man, that Reason is not entailed to the Relation of a Superiour, or the Degree of a Doctor. *Anima racionales sunt aequales in perfectione Substantiali*, and Superiority or Doctorship make no difference. Experience teacheth us; that improvement by Study, makes not a difference, as to the Exercise of Reason, between all Superiours and Inferiours; nor between all those who are Doctors and no Doctors. It remaineth therefore, that the particular Reason of every Soul must stand up in defence of it self, especially in matters of Practice, as to which Eternal Salvation or Damnation are concerned; so as it is not Naturally possible, that a Reasonable Soul should from Forreign Authority conclude a thing *probably Lawful*, which from its own Rational conclusions it judgeth *probably Unlawful*.

§. 16. But further yet, certainly it is repugnant to the connate Principles of Reasonable Souls, to assert contraries, both at the same time to be true, because it is of the Nature of contraries to destroy one another. Now, the Understanding which shall thus assert, must at the same time speak these two things, which are manifest contradictions: *This is Lawful. This is not Lawful.* I think and Judge it *Lawful*, because A, B, C, D, &c. say so. I think it *Unlawful*, because my own Reason, comparing things *Spiritual with Spiritual*, or concluding from confessed Principles, tells me it is so. Must not this be a very odd Soul, that can Discourse after this rate? Vasquez was aware of this, and thought to avoid it, by denying these two Propositions to be *Contradictory*, viz. 1. *This is probably Lawful.* 2. *This is probably unlawful.* But he deludeth, and his fallacy lyes in the word *probably*, which in the Question signifieth not the Affection of the proposition, but the Nature of

the Arguments, or Complexion of the Conscience. The Understanding (let the Jesuite say what he will) must say, *This is Lawful*, and *This is unlawful*, of the same thing, and at the same time; and these are perfect contradictions. The Notion of *Probable* referreth to the Understanding, not to the Nature of the Opinion, and must in the Question be Interpreted by *Opinion*, or *Credo*, or some such like word; not by *probabilis potest* (which is the Jesuites cheat) that is, *something may be said, in Argument to prove this thing Lawful*, and *something may also be said to prove it unlawful*. These two Propositions are not indeed Contradictions; but to say, *I think this Lawful*, and at the same time to say, *I also think this is unlawful*, Can be no Language of any Mans Soul, till the Philistines have got it, and put out its Eyes, on purpose to make themselves sport with it.

§. 11. Finally, *Is it not the Principle of a Reasonable Soul, to embrace that which it judgeth Best, either upon the Account of Truth or Righteousness?* Now, where both parts of a Proposition appear but *probable*. i. e. Such as something in Argument may be said for either; but one (in appearance to the particular Soul) far more probable, both as to *Truth* and *Righteousness*, than the other. Is it not contrary to its principles to own and embrace that which it judgeth less true in it self, and consequently, less Righteous to be done? even the Popish School-men and Casuists will confess our own Opinion to be more probable, though indeed they most absurdly say, That a man is not bound to follow that which probably is more True and Righteous, (so great a Power hath Corrupt Interest) we conclude therefore,

“That it being Naturally impossible for a Reasonable Soul to act Reasonably contrary to Naturally Rational Principles, it is also naturally impossible for it to Judge at the same time, the same thing, probably Lawful, from in-artificial and Extrinsic Arguments, which it judgeth probably, and more probably unlawful from Artificial intrinsic Arguments.

§. 12. By this time, we hope we have gained one Post (and that not inconsiderable) which we doubt not to make good against all the Attaques of Popish, or Protestant Divines, but such as are onely made from their Bitter words, which wound onely (by recoiling) the malicious hearts of those that cast them: We have shewen that there is (as Job saith) a Spirit in every Man, and the Almighty

Almighty hath given to every one, a peculiar practick Understanding, which muſt to him be Gods Interpreter, and the proximate Rule and Guide of all his Actions; which particular Conſcience acknowledgeth God onely as its immediate Superiour, and where the Eternal welfare of the ſoul is concerned in the Action, can neither bow down to the New Erected Idol of the Publick Conſcience, and much leſs, to the private Conſciences and Judgments of any, to do things which they Judge Lawful, meerly becauſe They ſay they are Lawful, and ſo will the Practiſe of them as lawful, becauſe their Superiours, or ſuch Doctours ſay ſo; when as it judgeth the thing wicked and unlawful, from Arguments, which though it cannot call Demonſtrative, and indubitable, yet it ſelf cannot Answer, nor ſee Answered by any other, ſo as it can acquieſce in the Answer as ſufficient, and therefore ſeem to it very probably concludiſg the thing unlawful. We have (as we hope) alſo gained this. That it is Naturally impoſſible for a reaſonable Soul, at the ſame time, to Judge the ſame thing Lawful, from in-artificial extrinſick Arguments; which from intrinſick Arguments formed within it ſelf, or accepted by it, though formed by others, it Judgeth probably unlawful.

§. 13. It is therefore the buſineſs of thoſe who think themſelves concerned to make all the World in Practiſe uniform, even to a Letter and a Syllable, and a rite, and poſture, not to tell them, *that in caſe the thing be diſputable, or doubtful, or not apparently and demonſtratively evil, it is their Duty, if Commanded, to do it.* For this we have ſhewed to be the very Foundation of Popery, and a perfect Innovation in Proteſtant Doctrin, and can be no other than a Blind Obedience. But (as we ſaid before) they will be concerned to call to Diſſenters for their Arguments, upon the probability of which to them, the things required ſeem to them unlawful; and (if they can) to deſtroy that appearance which they have of probability, which done, they will attain their end, and not before.

§. 14. The things are many which are required of us, in Order to our having a ſtation in the publick Miniſtry of England, ſome of which are queſtioned by ſome, others of them by others; in ſhort, from them theſe Queſtions ariſe.

1. *Whether the Non-Conformiſts have not probable Arguments to induce their Conſciences to judge it unlawful to perform their Miniſterial Office in publick Prayer, by the preſcribed forms of other Men.*
2. *Whether*

2. Whether they have not probable Arguments to judge it unlawful, to Minister before the Lord in a Surplice, or any Habit peculiarly appropriated to the Worship of God, to sign with the sign of the cross in Baptism, and to Kneel in the Alt of Receiving the Lords Supper.

3. Whether those of them who have been solemnly set apart to the Ministry by Fasting and Prayer, and laying on of hands of a Presbytery, can without sin, submit to a re-ordination by Bishops, and there be not, at least, very probable Arguments to the contrary.

4. Whether they have not probable Arguments to induce them to judge it unlawful for them to subscribe, That the Oath, commonly called, The Solemn League and Covenant, obligeth neither them nor any others, and that it is in it self an unlawful Oath.

5. Whether they have not probable Arguments to induce them to judge it unlawful for them to declare and subscribe, That they do assent and consent to all and every thing, or to the use of all and every thing contained in the Common-Prayer.

6. Whether they have not probable Arguments to induce them to judge it unlawful for them to subscribe the Second and Third Article in the 36 Canon.

7. Whether they have not probable Arguments to induce them to judge it unlawful to take the Oath, Ordinarily called, the Oath of Canonical Obedience.

Those who know any thing of the State of Ecclesiastical affairs in England this day, know, that those who will conform, must do all these things; and the Non-Conformists are so far from judging all these things Lawful, that they think they have very probable Arguments, why (many of them at least) cannot judge any one of them Lawful; and while they so judge, act they cannot contrary to the Opinion of their own Consciences, as we have before proved.

§. 15. Neither do they desire to talk of Arguments onely in Justification of their own Sullenness, or Peevishness, as they are maliciously represented by some Modern Doctors (far better at Reviling than Disputing.) Their Arguments, in the first Case, are many of them in Print, as in Mr. Cotton's *Discourse against Set-forms* (many years since Printed, but that we know of, never Answered) as also in Mr. Calderwood's *Altare Damas.* never Answered neither; and in divers other Books. In the Second Case, their Arguments never yet Answered, are to be found, In Mr.

Mr. Bradshaw's Discourses about things Indifferent, and about Worship and Ceremonies. In Dr. Ames his Trish Suit against the Ceremonies. In Mr. Calderwood's Altare Damascum. In Mr. Gillespie's Disp. against the Engl^{sh} Ceremonies. Upon the 3d. Case, divers of their Arguments are in R. A. his Letter to a Friend, Printed 1661. And The Serious Review of Presbyters Ordination by Bishops, Printed about the same time; and in all the other Cases, Our Brethren know, that Arguments are in Print to prove them *unlawful*, which never yet received any Answer. Besides, as there is a variety of *Mediums*, so the same sure not every Fancy, nor are all produced, and the work of them who should undertake to shew the Arguments of all not *probable*, would be almost infinite.

Self. 16. What shall be done in this Case by those Superiours who will believe themselves, as well as their Inferiours, obliged, according to the Apostles Precept, To Walk Charitably, not laying a stumbling-block before others, nor doing, as much as in them lyeth, to destroy poor Souls, for whom Christ dyed. We say, what can be done by such Superiours in these Cases? unless this: Either that in the things of God, they be very tender, and enjoyn no such things, as any considerable Number of their Inferiours thus Judge unlawful, (at least, if they Judge them not by God Comanded to be done, or to be avoided,) Or if they Judge it expedient to Command some other things for Splendor, or (as they Judge) Decency, which the Inferiours cannot Judge Lawful; Indulge them, who so cannot Judge of them, as themselves do, but verily believing them, from Arguments which appear to them *probable*, *unlawful* for them to do; which is our present Case. For whiles the Superiour in such things as these, insisteth upon his Authority, he unavoidably forceth them to *sin against God*, who so Judge them unlawful, yet through some Fear, or out of some Temptation of want, or the like, will adventure to do them. Now, no Soul can Justifie it self before God, in Commanding another to do what he knows would be *sin to him*, unless it would also be *sin in him*, not to Command or force him. And for others who dare Aſt, he forceth them to suffer, in which Case, because (their Consciences so Judging of the things) they should *sin* in doing of them, they must suffer to avoid *sinning*, which we are sure is, (in one sense at least) to suffer for Righteousness sake; and for what they Judge (to use Dr. Ashton's phrase) the Exercise of the True Religion; and all Sober Persons will so judge in the first sense: and whether it be so or no, The great day of the Lord must Evidence. Both which certainly are Rocks, which all Superiours ought to avoid, and all Wise Masters, and Masters Mates, in the great Ships of Kingdoms, and Commonwealths will avoid, though some less advised Boat-swains, passionate Chaplains, or ignorant Mariners in those Ships, may clamour, to take the Advantage of the Wind of Passion and Revenge, which blows (they think) in these Cases fair for the Advantage of their private Lucre, but must certainly drive them, either upon this Scylla, or that Charibdis. Every considerate Superiour will Judge the price of Souls purchased with the Blood of him who was the Son of God, at another rate. Indeed if the Superiour judgeth the things which he Commandeth, in their own Nature necessary, and what it is the Will of God (antecedaneous to his Command) that all Men should do, whether indeed they be so or no. He is also tyed to the Peace of his own Conscience; he is Gods Vice-gerent, he must Command, and inforce them; and the doing of what is plain to him, to be the great Creators Will, in his place, must be attended before the danger of any Creatures Souls; and this alone (where the

the Superiours Conscience is fixed in an Error) necessarily causeth a *Persecution*.

Self. 17. This appeareth to us so clear, both from Scripture, and the Concurrent Judgment of all Protestant Divines, for a Mans not Acting contrary to the Opinion of his own Conscience; that we cannot be so Charitable, but we must think, that those Divines who indeed are Protestants, and are for the upholding these impositions, and against any Indulgence to those that dissent because of them, and are Authors to Magistrates, to enforce the things by Penalties; are *dissonant* Condemned by their own Consciences. For they cannot but know, that the Dissenters, thus Opining, must sin, should they do the things: and if they Suffer, they must Suffer that they might avoid sinning. And for the Interpretation of that, "What it is for a Superiour, not constrained in his own Conscience from the expresse revealed Will of God, to make his Inferiours Suffer, because they will not do what they cannot do, without running the hazard of their Souls by wilful sinning: We shall only say, Let the Interpretation be to them that hate our King, and to the Enemies of all English Nobility or Gentry.

Self. 18. To Conclude then, this we Judge enough to demonstrate the exceeding Reasonableness, and great Religion of a Gracious Liberty; to which His most Sacred Majesty hath Declared his Willingness, and the Persevering of which hath once and again been under the Deliberation of the High and Honourable Assembly of Parliament: as to those, whose Suffering by it is obviated, because they cannot do what they Charitably believe their Superiours would not have willed them to do, had they not Judged them in themselves Lawful; But yet themselves will not say are necessary (otherwise than as they are pleaded to be so made by their Command) but they who are their Inferiours, do *bonâ fide* and *ex animo*, Judge them Unlawful; and that from Arguments, which they will not call necessary, indubitable, and demonstrative (for they confess themselves not Infallible) but which appear to them very highly probable, such as they cannot Answer, nor find Answered by others, so as to give them any Satisfaction.

FIN IS.

